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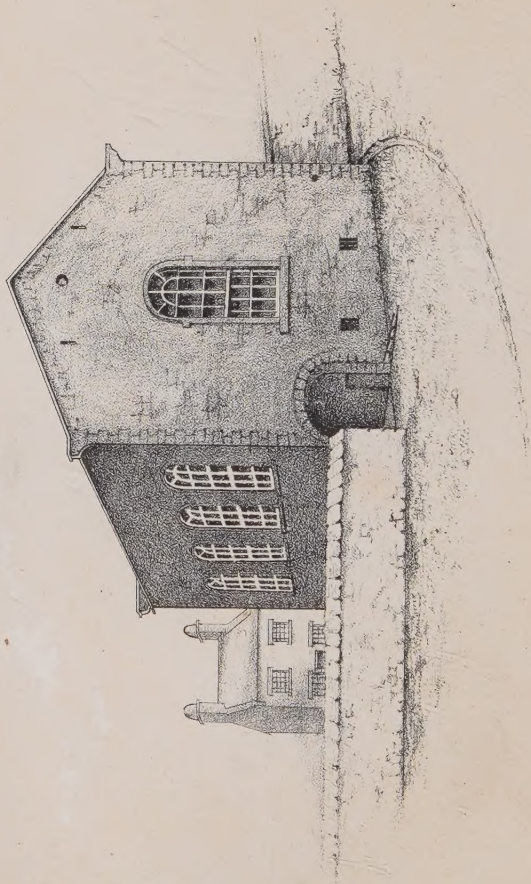
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HISTORY

OF

METHODISM

IN

BARNARD CASTLE

AND THE

PRINCIPAL PLACES

IN THE

Dales Circuit.

BY ANTHONY STEELE.

LONDON :

GEORGE VICKERS, ANGEL COURT, STRAND.

1857.

Y A O T Y

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METHUEN

BARNARD CASTLE

R. BARKER, PRINTER, BARNARD CASTLE.

ST. ALBANS, 1871

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ALBANS, 1871

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PREFACE.

THE following pages make no pretensions to literary merit. They contain a plain unvarnished narrative of facts, adorned only with the native simplicity of truth. The aim of the author has been to avoid recording any questionable statements which could not be borne out by the testimony of undoubted witnesses, both as to number and credibility. Trained from his youth under a parental roof, long distinguished by its attachment to Methodism, it was his delight in the days of his boyhood, to listen to many an interesting fireside conversation, carried on by grey-headed sires, depicting with lively emotions the struggles which the good work had to sustain in their own days, and in the old time before them.

The traditionary facts thus obtained, he has carefully collated, with the journals of Mr. Wesley, the early volumes of magazines, and every authentic source of information within his reach.—The greatest care and delicacy have been observed in refraining from such statements as might cause the infliction of unnecessary pain.

The narrative has reference principally to the events of the olden times, chiefly, lest they should become irrecoverably lost. The history of the last forty years of Methodism in this neighbourhood has yet to be written ; and the author of the present work, leaves to the future historian who may be disposed to undertake it, a compendium of facts and sketches, which may serve as a ground work for a more elaborated history.

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CHAPTER I.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE PLACE BEFORE METHODISM.

A SUPERFICIAL acquaintance with the history of our own country, will convince us of the general prevalence of darkness and irreligion three centuries ago. The day of the reformation had dawned upon our isle, but the light was at first exceedingly dim, and remarkably slow in its advances. A corrupt system of religious worship had been displaced, but it was a considerable period before any sensible improvement in the morals of the people, or the general tone of society was discernible. This was peculiarly the case in the northern shires of this kingdom. Their contiguity to Scotland rendered them subject to frequent and unwelcome incursions from the Borderers, who at that period were regarded as uncivilized marauders, bent on destruction and plunder, so that the repeated animosities and conflicts into which they were plunged, had the tendency of brutalizing the mind, and retarding the progress of civilization and order. These remarks especially apply to those northern dales, of which, when first formed into a Methodistical circuit, Barnard Castle

constituted the head. The town of Barnard Castle is very ancient, the castle having been built and strongly fortified by Bernard Baliol, between the years 1112 and 1132. The protection thus afforded in those days of predatory warfare, was probably, in the first instance, the powerful magnet that attracted the residents to erect their dwellings under the shelter of its walls. The pen of the historian has furnished but scanty information of the spiritual condition of the inhabitants at this period to which we refer, or of the first evangelists who were employed in proclaiming the gospel of divine grace in this neighbourhood. It has however been conjectured, and not without strong grounds of probability, that the stern Scottish Reformer, John Knox, occasionally preached the gospel here. Knox had married Margery, the daughter of Sir Richard Bowes, and after his return from Geneva and Frankfort, appears to have spent a considerable time at the residence of his mother-in-law, a lady of distinguished piety with whom he had held familiar correspondence for some length of time.* Streatlam Castle the seat of the Bowes' family, being only about two miles distant from the town, it is not at all improbable that the bold reformer would devote some attention to the spiritual interests of its inhabitants; and though it may be difficult fully to establish the fact from direct historic record, yet it is not too much to conjecture, that the

* See McCrie's Life of Knox.

pious zeal of her Ladyship, added to his own restless activity, would not allow him to remain in indolence at the castle, whilst an uninstructed population, perishing for lack of knowledge, was lying at the door.

In the latter end of the year 1569, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland rose in defence of what they termed "the old religion," and levied forces in various places in the north of England. Sir George Bowes, a gallant soldier and a zealous Protestant, entered into an active confidential correspondence with the Earl of Sussex, directing his attention to the constant passage of men under suspicious circumstances, towards Brancepeth, the seat of the Earl of Westmoreland. He considered it prudent to leave his own residence at Sireatham, and repair to the Queen's Castle, at Barnard Castle of which he was steward, and hastily assembled his household, tenants, and friends. Sir George being empowered to levy men for the service of the Queen, several well affected gentlemen in the neighbourhood, assembled at Barnard Castle, and placed themselves under his command. The rebels eventually besieged the Castle, and after a close investment of eleven days, during which the gallant defender laboured under every species of discouragement from the mutinies of his soldiers, and the scarcity of provisions, he was allowed to march out with a diminished but faithful band of soldiers, and joined the royal army. This would be about December 13, 1569.

A few years after this, Lady Isabella Bowes, the wife of Sir William Bowes, and daughter of Judge Wray, a kind, right well known patroness of Puritan Ministers, manifested great anxiety for the furtherance of the Gospel in Barnard Castle and its vicinity. Her influence was kindly exerted in behalf of those pious faithful men, who were called to suffer, in consequence of their nonconformity, and she placed many of them in situations where evangelical preaching was most needed. Her Ladyship expended £1000 per year, in the maintenance of those preachers whom she had taken under her patronage, such as Paul Bayne, William Dike, and others of the same stamp.

Upon the death of Sir William Bowes, his remains were brought from Waldon, near Chesterfield, for interment in the family vault in Barnard Castle Church, attended by his domestic chaplain, the Rev. William Dike. Upon his return from the funeral, he was led, from the observations he had made, to bring before her Ladyship, the ignorant and irreligious state of the town, which is represented as being then destitute of a resident minister. She proposed to him to take the oversight of those perishing souls, but he declared he durst not venture amongst so "surly a people." He knew, however, a courageous minister of the name of Richard Rothwell, born at or near Bolton, in Lancashire, in 1563, whom he earnestly commended to her Ladyship's notice : a man of undaunted boldness and resolution,

remarkable for his skill in opening out the depths of Satan, and the deceitfulness of the human heart, and in such homely and familiar language, as to obtain for him the designation of the "Rough Hewer." And in such a quarry as this, amid such hard impenetrable materials, he appeared to be the very man that the place required. She sent for him from the house of the Earl of Devonshire, where he then was, and offered him the situation. Rothwell at once embraced the proposition, and expressed his readiness to go, and to remain with the people if they should accept of him. At his first day's labour, they all desired him, so that he returned to her Ladyship to signify his acceptance of the call. Lady Bowes, aware of the rough manners of the people, expressed her fears that they might deal unkindly with him. "Madam," said the intrepid herald of the Cross, "if I thought I should not meet the devil "there, I would not come; he and I have been at odds "in other places, and I hope we shall not agree there." He requested a young candidate for the ministry, of the name of Stanley Gower, of Dorsetshire, to become his companion in labour, assisting him at the same time, in his preparations for the university. For about eight years he was his bedfellow, and an eyewitness of his great success over all the country, where he was worthily called the Apostle of the North.

At his entrance upon his labours, he met with great opposition, and was sometimes in danger of his life from

the fierce hatred of his foes, who way laid him, but his patience and courage surmounted every difficulty, so that at length his greatest enemies were afraid to meddle with him. Such was the unction accompanying his ministry, that he preached few sermons, whereby he did not win some souls. His forenoons were devoted to study, and afterwards he visited the flock throughout the parish, in which work he so excelled, as to gain their affections. The fame of his devotedness and success travelled far and wide, so that within four years he had many judicious and experienced Christians coming from London, York, Newcastle, and Richmond, to see the order of his congregation ; whilst on the other hand, a few lewd characters came from a distance of ten or twelve miles to hear him, that they might carp or find some matter of accusation against him, some of whom the power of God arrested, and they returned home convinced or converted. Neal, the Bishop of Durham, at one time sent three pursuivants to apprehend him, promising them a hundred pounds if they succeeded. Rothwell was out of the town when they arrived, and on his return had timely notice from his young friend of their intentions; but he was not the man to run away.

A neighbouring gentleman, of the name of Israel Fielding, a true Israelite residing at Startforth,* beyond the bounds of the Bishop's jurisdiction, offered him his

* Startforth is a village half a mile from Barnard Castle, in the County of York.

house as a sanctuary, but the bold hero laconically replied, "I had thought you had been my friend, can you tell me the devil's greatest name?" It was replied "Beelzebub." "And what," said he, "is Beelzebub? The master of a fly, and if he be so, what are these? Midges;—I will therefore go to my people and let the devil do his worst." He sent to the pursuivants to come to him, when, drawing his sword, with which he always rode, he sternly bade them keep their distance, and not come too near him, but, if they were bent upon their errand, he dared them to advance, for there was his supersedeas. The terror-stricken cowards retreated, having no power to lay hands on him. He then called to them to go back to their master and tell him, that "if he have anything to say to me, I will meet him on Barnard Castle Bridge, * and if he can pull me over to him, let him take me—But, go you," he added, "and serve a better master, else he that sets you to work will pay your wages;" and so he left them.

The period of Rothwell's ministry in those parts appears to have been from 1610 to 1620. Not the town alone, but an extensive tract of country was the scene of his labours, but the precise time or occasion of his removal, we cannot now ascertain. He died at Mansfield Woodhouse, in Nottinghamshire, in 1627, in the sixty fourth year of his age; his end was peace and holy triumph. When some of his friends had

* The Bridge divides the Counties of York and Durham.

prayed with him, with a heavenly smile, he exclaimed, "now I am well—happy is he that hath not bowed a knee to Baal! sing the 120th Psalm." He sung awhile with them, but before the Psalm was concluded, he was joining in the music of Heaven. Richard Rothwell was a bright light shining out of the darkness of a corrupt age; few in the English orb at that period shone brighter. His benevolent disposition, his fervent zeal, his undaunted courage, and his undissembled piety, stand out most prominently in his character, and betoken him to have been a man of no ordinary calibre. Lady Bowes allowed him £40 per year, and such as had received spiritual benefit, through his instrumentality, contributed to the augmentation of his stipend, but he nobly declined to receive any pecuniary aid from others.

Rothwell was neither afraid of men nor devils. His biographer * has furnished a minute account of a visit which he paid to a man of the name of John Fox, residing in the neighbourhood of Nottingham, who was grievously tormented of the devil. He has detailed a long conversation in the form of a dialogue between him and the foul Spirit, in which his replies to the malignant fiend were so forcible, that at length the Evil Spirit abruptly exclaimed, "why stand I talking with thee? all men know thou art bold Rothwell, and fearest nobody."

* See Clark's Gen. Martyrology and Lives of twenty two Divines.

After praying with the afflicted man for about a quarter of an hour, during which he seemed to suffer exquisite torments, prayer prevailed, and the man after remaining a few moments, apparently on the point of expiring, was perfectly restored: he was afterwards struck dumb and for three years remained without the use of his speech, yet in the end he recovered this also, and continued to speak graciously to his dying day.

A little while after this, the kingdom became embroiled in all the disasters of civil war. Those were troublesome times. Any amelioration in the improvement of public morals was obstructed, and the church had to bear its share in the miseries of that day. As the Parliamentary party gained the ascendancy, they soon exerted their newly acquired powers. Ministers were driven out of their benefices, and others were elected to supply their places. Yet it must be admitted that the majority of those who were compelled to resign their livings, were not of that disinterested class, who sought the salvation of their flocks, more than their own temporal comforts, so that in numerous instances the livings were supplied by better men.

By appointment of Parliament, John Rogers was sent to Barnard Castle, in 1644. He was the son of a minister of that name at Chacomb, in Nottinghamshire, and was a zealous, faithful servant of his master, unweariedly labouring to promote the salvation of those who were committed to his charge. He took a list of

his flock, and found them to amount to two thousand souls, and particularly marked who were fit or unfit to attend at the sacramental table. He visited and instructed his parishioners, supplying them with suitable books, and took great pains in rescuing their poor children from the paths of misery and vice. He was a zealous observer of the sabbath, and always resisted the driving of cattle through the town on that day. He was of a catholic spirit, "given to hospitality," and secured the esteem of all who enjoyed his acquaintance. Rogers was evangelical in his principles, bold and courageous in his spirit, and inflexible in what he considered a righteous cause. His promptitude was put to the test upon one occasion, when an officer of repute belonging to a regiment then quartered in the town, sent a message to him, to demand his pulpit, (it being no uncommon practice in those days of disturbance and confusion, to combine the military and ministerial offices in the same person) ; Mr. R. instead of a tame compliance, enquired by what authority he sought to preach, saying, " though the soldiers keep the town, I am resolved to guard the pulpit." The only memorial of this good man now to be found in the place, is an inscription upon a brass plate against the wall in the chancel of Barnard Castle Church, recording the death of two children, Jonathan and John—the former died November 8th, 1650, in infancy—

" He peep'd into the world where he could see,
Nought but confusion—sin—and misery.

Thence 'scap'd into his Saviour's arms : thus he
Got Heav'n for fourteen days mortality."

His son John departed this life August 30th, 1652, and the following lines are added to the record of his death :—

"Blest soul thy name did mind us of God's grace,
Thou wast his gift, whose love show'd us thy face:
But he that gave, did take, in one month's space,
Thou found'st in father's arms a resting place."

Mr. Rogers was afterwards ejected from Barnard Castle, and by the procurement of Lord Wharton, obtained a ministerial cure at Croglin, in Cumberland. But from this place he appears to have been driven by the Bartholomew Act in 1662, and returned to Barnard Castle, where notwithstanding his ejectment, he pursued his ministerial labours without fear ; in 1672 he licensed a place in Startforth, which belonged to his brother-in-law, Mr A. Barnes of Newcastle, and also continued to exercise his ministry at Stockton, Darlington, Middleton-in-Teesdale, and in Weardale. His love to souls bore him above the inconveniences arising from deep snows, high mountains, and miserable roads over which he had to travel, to dispense the word of life to a people famishing for want of it, and manifesting a mighty eagerness to hear. For this vast amount of labour, he received only ten pounds per year ; yet he had some little property of his own which helped out his income, and even enabled him to be generous to those who stood in need. He was much respected by

Sir Harry Vane and his son, and the family seat being at Raby Castle, he had frequent opportunities of conversing with them; and when the unfortunate Sir Henry Vane the younger, was committed to the Tower, for the part he had taken in the death of Charles the First, Mr. Rogers, as an old acquaintance, was permitted to visit him in his confinement.

Mr. Rogers did not escape exposure to persecution during the memorable period when religious liberty was crippled by the operation of divers persecuting acts. A remarkable anecdote is preserved in *Palmer's Nonconformist Memorial*, of a providential escape which he had from being sent to prison, by Sir Richard Cradock, a neighbouring justice of the peace, (residing probably at Gainford). A grand-daughter of Sir Richard's, who was only about seven years of age, seeing the good man sitting in the waiting room, became deeply interested in his case, and learning that her grandfather was about to commit him to gaol, determinately resisted it, threatening to drown herself in the great pond. As she was a spoiled child, they were afraid of consequences, and Mr. Rogers was dismissed. The good man devoutly placed his hands on the head of the little girl, praying that the blessing of that God whom she then knew not, and the cause of whose servant, she had that day advocated, might rest upon her, for time and eternity. She afterwards heard the above mentioned circumstances related by his son the Rev. Timothy Rogers, and acknowledg-

ing herself to be the little girl who had been instrumental in procuring the release of Mr. Rogers, detailed in a very interesting manner, the particulars of her conversion to God. Her name was then Mrs. Tooley, and she was an eminent christian. Mr. Rogers died with great calmness, at Startforth, November 28th, 1680, in the seventieth year of his age. His remains were interred at Barnard Castle, and his funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Brokell, the resident clergyman of the parish. It would have been a happy circumstance for the town and neighbourhood, if the labours of such eminent men as Rothwell and Rogers had been supplemented by those of a similar stamp. But the national degeneracy which followed, during the reign of the profligate and licentious Charles Second, was greatly calculated to neutralize the good that had been effected, through the zealous exertions of a host of the most devoted and indefatigable men, who ever graced the pulpits of the Church of England. It is true that a succession of ministers was kept up in Barnard Castle, both in the established Church and in a dissenting meeting house : but the period intervening from the restoration until the time of Wesley and Whitefield, has been truly described, as the most unevangelical that had occurred in this country since the reformation had been completed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Many of the clergy were grossly ignorant of the truths they professed to teach, and many were very immoral and

corrupt in their general conversation. These remarks might be easily verified by the testimony of competent and unprejudiced historians, who had every facility for obtaining a correct knowledge of the state of public morals at that period. These preliminary observations will enable us to arrive at some adequate conception of the spiritual state of this part of the country, at the time when the venerated Wesley and his coadjutors commenced those labours of mercy and benevolence, which form the subject of this narrative.—Darkness had covered the land,—the pulse of religious feeling was faint,—little more than the lifeless form of Christianity was remaining, whilst wickedness and profanity stalked forth with a giant step, and men had become savage and brutalized, lawless and refractory, and ready to embark in any mischievous enterprise, however repugnant to law, whether human or divine.

It is unnecessary to preface this history with any specific detail of the rise of Methodism, the character of its founder, or the doctrines which he believed and preached. The tale has oft been told, and the Journal of Mr. Wesley, and the Magazines will long continue to perpetuate the remembrance of that interesting event.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM.

It is rather difficult at this remote period, in the absence of well authenticated historical data, to furnish in the regular order of their occurrence, a circumstantial detail of the various incidents connected with the rise of Methodism in this place. The life of Mr. Thomas Hanby, in the third volume of the *Arminian Magazine*, will form a guide to enable us to arrive at some of the leading facts: and collated with the traditional accounts that have been handed down from father to son, will bring before us the origin of that blessed work, which has issued in the establishment of a christian church, long honoured with signal marks of the approbation of its Great Head.

From the best information that can now be obtained, it appears that its commencement may be dated from the year 1747. Its beginning was indeed small. The Lord of the vineyard did not select one of his most distinguished workmen to plant the tree of righteousness in this sterile soil: but it pleased Him who "hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the

things which are mighty," to employ a shoe maker of the name of Joseph Cheesebrough, as an humble instrument in first breaking up the ground, to prepare it for succeeding labourers, who entering after him, planted and watered with happy success. This man was a native of Barnard Castle, but in the order of divine providence his lot had been cast in Leeds, where he became acquainted with the Methodists, and experienced the converting grace of the gospel. The want of health led to his return to his native air, and soon his heart began to burn with intense desire for the salvation of his fellow townsmen. He attempted to promote this, not by preaching or exhortation, but by friendly discourse with his former acquaintances, and particularly with his shopmates. They listened with attention to those strange things which he brought to their ears, and some of them received the truth, amongst the first of whom were Joseph Garnet and John Loadman. But there was no evangelist to preach Jesus publicly,—no regular ministry by which these converts might be established in the truth. Being desirous of obtaining spiritual help, and hearing of an active pious woman of the name of Catherine Graves, who, after travelling with Mr. Whitefield, in Scotland, was then at Darlington, on her return; some of them went thither and prevailed upon her to come to Barnard Castle, that she might help them forward in the divine life. She took up her residence in the place, and immediately laid

herself out for usefulness, by instituting prayer meetings, and occasionally exhorting those who were assembled together. The few who were determined to seek the salvation of their souls, she formed into a class, of which she became leader.

Satan did not like this bold attempt against his kingdom, and very soon instigated his servants to arise and defend his territories, and, if possible, crush this dreaded opposition in its infancy. The fire of persecution was soon lighted, and it seems as though the fiends of darkness had left their own habitations, and entered into the hearts of men, inciting them to the most outrageous acts of violence, in order to arrest the progress of this new and strange thing. For fear of the mob, the members of the infant society were wont to meet together in an upper chamber, where they read the Scriptures, and the works which Mr. Wesley had then published, sang hymns, and prayed. The return of every night found them engaged in these devotional exercises, and though frequently mocked and disturbed, yet they bore it patiently, and in the spirit of meekness. In the mean time their persecutors were at a loss to account for the motives which induced them to act in a way so different from the rest of mankind: they ignorantly supposed such conduct must be the result of magic, and attributed it to the machinations of the pious woman just alluded to : hence as she passed along the streets, they would run after her to prick her arms

with pins, in order to draw the blood from her, and thus elude the power of her supposed witchcraft. So closely were those twin-sisters, ignorance and superstition associated together ! But the Keeper of Israel protected his own, and covered their defenceless heads in the day of battle. It would have been interesting, had we been furnished with more ample information respecting this "Mother in Israel," who so tenderly watched over, and affectionately nursed this infant society; "her works praise her in the gates" of Zion, and deserve to be recorded. But we regret that the only further particulars we can furnish respecting her, relate to her marriage with Joseph Garnett, (on the 25th May, 1752,) who was subsequently called out into the itinerant work, and died in the harness. She survived her husband many years, receiving an annuity of £12 from the Preacher's Merciful Fund. She died at a good old age, in London, about the year 1813 ; and her flesh rests in hope, in the Burial Ground of the New Chapel, City Road, where a plain stone erected to her memory may be seen.

The excellent Thomas Hanby (afterwards an eminent preacher in the connexion) was early convinced of the truth. He went one evening with a few of his ungodly companions to the place of meeting; and as they were disposed to mock, he joined with them. Conscience however smote him for his evil conduct, and he felt a secret persuasion that this poor and despised people,

were able to shew him the way of salvation. The next night he went again, and begged he might be permitted to come in amongst them: he was accordingly admitted, and thenceforward embraced every opportunity of assembling with them. He soon met with his share of persecution, and frequently as he passed along the streets had to hold his hands before his face, in order to avoid the stones and blows which were plentifully bestowed about him.

Opposition now reared its head in another quarter. The Clergyman of the parish, the Rev. William Dunn, sounded the alarm that the church was in danger, and seasoned his sermons with severe invectives against the Methodists; a practice not at all uncommon in those days! Not content with this, he sent for a cousin of Mr. Hanby's, of the name of John Robinson, who had joined the society along with him, and laboured to convince him that the Methodists were all in error. In proof of this he produced several old puritanical books, which treated on the new birth, &c., and then drew the conclusion, "It is a false religion because it is an old religion!!!" By such means he prevailed upon Mr. Robinson (who though a moral character, was not then converted) to leave the society, and proposed to him a plan for forming a religious association upon rational principles; and promised to attend sometimes himself.

This proposition was adopted, and Mr. Hanby enter-

taining a high opinion of his cousin's piety, united with him, and in a little time they had a larger society than the Methodists. It may be easily imagined, however, of what kind of characters it was composed, mere formal professors, who could play at cards, take their pleasures, and conform to the world in almost everything; a house built on such a sandy foundation, could not long stand; the newly formed society dwindled away, till none were left but Mr. Hanby and his cousin. A fine practical illustration of the soundness of the argument which Gamaliel maintained, "If this work or counsel be of man, it shall come to nought," and so it did—but the work of Methodism was of God, hence neither argument nor violence could overturn it. Mr. Hanby at length saw his error in leaving the Methodists, and convinced that none could shew him the way of salvation like them, resolved to retrace his steps, and entreated his cousin to return with him. He at first manifested some reluctance, but Mr. Hanby prevailing, they were re-admitted into the fold of the church, and remaining faithful and steadfast to death, are now enjoying together the glory of the beatific vision.

Mr. Hanby's account of his own conversion is artless and expressive. He says, "God continued to draw me with strong desires, and I spent much time praying in the fields, woods, and barns. Any place, and every place, was now a closet to my mourning soul, and I longed for the Day-Star to arise in my poor benighted

heart. And it pleased Infinite mercy while I was praying, that the Lord set my weary soul at liberty. The next day the Lord was pleased to withdraw the ecstasy of joy,—and I had well nigh given up my confidence—but the Lord met me again while I was in the fields, and from that time I was enabled to keep a weak hold of the precious Lord Jesus.” A little after his conversion, he went to reside at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and found a comfortable home in the house of Mr. Robert Carr. Here he had the opportunity of hearing a preacher every morning and evening, and of conversing with many established Christians, so that his soul became more richly fraught with spiritual enjoyments. Full of this living water, drawn from these wells of salvation, he returned to Barnard Castle, and communicated to his Christian friends, all that he could remember of the many excellent sermons he had heard in Newcastle. Having observed also the Christian spirit of the society there, and studied the nature of their discipline, he was prepared to instruct the infant church in his native town, in the things of God, and to strengthen his brethren.

Mr. Hanby having remained some time at Barnard Castle after his return from the north, resolved to take one journey more, to Leeds, to sit at the feet of the brethren there, like another Apollos learning of Aquilla and Priscilla, ‘the way of God more perfectly,’ intending then to return and take up his permanent abode

amongst the early companions of his pilgrimage. But the Great Head of the Church had other employment for him than stuffmaking, the business to which he had been brought up. A sudden impression entered his mind that he was called to preach the gospel, and he became truly miserable. Remembering the wormwood and the gall, of which the preachers had drank at Barnard Castle, he shrunk from the bitter cup, and would gladly have persuaded himself that this was a temptation from the devil, but the conviction, 'like an injured ghost,' still haunted him. At length he bowed to the will of God, desirous only to ascertain that. Just at the time, hearing of a poor woman who was supposed to be dying, but exceedingly happy, he went in company with a friend to visit her, having prayed to God that if it were his will that he should preach, he would reveal it to the dying saint. He adds, "We came to the house where the sick woman lay, and as I was an entire stranger to her, and every body besides, I stood at a distance. Mr. Shent came in and prayed with her ; I followed him, to tell him, our Barnard Castle brethren would be glad of a visit from him. After I had delivered my message, I returned to the sick woman, and was told she had made much enquiry for the young man who stood in the corner. I came to the bedside, and she looked me earnestly in the face, and said, ' God has called you to preach the Gospel, you have long resisted the call ; but he will make you

go ; obey the call, obey the call !' She put such an emphasis upon 'he will make you go' that it shocked me exceedingly." He conferred no longer with flesh and blood, but embraced an early opportunity of making his first attempt at Bramley. In a few months he was called to go into Staffordshire, and thus commenced a toilsome, yet honourable career of ministerial labour, extending over a period of forty three years. His character was unsullied by a blot, and the soundness of his judgment on all questions, relating to Methodist discipline, acquired for him a high distinction among his brethren. He was elected the fourth President after Mr. Wesley's death, and took an active part in all the discussions touching the administration of the sacrament to the people, a question which he strenuously advocated. He died in great peace and holy triumph at Nottingham, December 29th, 1796, aged 63, proclaiming with his latest breath "I have fought a good fight."

In the course of a little time, the travelling preachers visited Barnard Castle. Mr. John Whitford was the first who came. He preached out of doors to a large and unruly congregation. "I was much affected," says Mr. Hanby, "especially when he repeated the words, O ! let not Christ's precious blood be shed in vain." Mr. Whitford left the connexion a few years after this, and turned Calvinist. He was followed by Mr. Tucker, who it is said had recently left the Estab-

lished Church. He took his stand in Newgate Street, but the mob assembled, and quickly commenced a most violent persecution. He was soon brought senseless to the ground, by a stone which hit him on the forehead. The mob proceeded to trample upon, and treat him in a most shameful manner : some of the ring leaders proposed to complete their murderous work, by taking him down to the River Tees, at the foot of the town, and casting him in. Two or three hoisted him upon their shoulders, but as they were proceeding along to accomplish their purpose, Mr. Hanby, who was then a strong young man, sprang forward to his assistance, rescued him out of their hands, and conducted him into a house. Some of the principal men in the town who had encouraged the rabble, being afraid, on calm reflection, that they had carried matters too far, were glad to endeavour to repair the mischief that had been done, by ordering proper attention to be paid to the preacher, to recover him of the effects of the wounds he had received. After him came Messrs. John Turnough, Jacob Rowell, John Fenwick and others, who often preached while the blood ran down their faces from the blows they received, and the pointed arrows which were thrown at them. Mr. William Darney is also remembered as being one of the first gospel heralds that blew the trumpet of peace in this town. He was a native of Scotland, of rather eccentric character, but esteemed a good man. His

manner of preaching was adapted to the rudeness of those times ; and though he sometimes made use of coarse expressions and illustrations, very much calculated to arrest attention, it was at the same time powerful, carrying conviction to the hearts of those who heard him. These men of God usually opened their commission in the open air: they were strangers to cowardice and fear, the love of Christ and of souls constraining them. A room was afterwards obtained in a house in Galgate, where the preaching was held, and numbers came to hear, some drawn by curiosity, others impelled by better motives.

The name of the first individual who entertained these messengers of salvation, is worthy of special record. This honour is awarded to Grace, the wife of Francis Dunn. After she had opened her doors for preaching, she was exposed to great annoyance on that account, from the violence of persecution. On one night alone, as stated by one of her descendants, damages to the amount of seven shillings were sustained, through the breaking of her windows ; a sum by no means inconsiderable in those days, more especially to those who were in humble circumstances. Yet she took patiently, if not "joyfully the spoiling of her goods, knowing that she had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." And when in the Great Day of eternity, those who in circumstances more favoured, have entertained a prophet in the name of a prophet,

shall receive a prophet's reward," this humble individual who provided the first bed, and table, and stool, and candlestick, to furnish a prophet's chamber, in this Shunem, shall not be forgotten. It is well known, however, that the first race of preachers for many years, found a cheerful and comfortable home with Joseph Garnett.

The immediate effect of the labours of these men of God, was agreeable to that of which Christ spake relative to his own coming, namely, "not to bring peace but rather division." "One member of a family was set against another, and a man's foes were they of his own household." A circumstance may be related, which not only serves to show the violence of persecution, but the value of the means of grace at that period. Opposite to the house where the preachers lodged, lived a pious woman, who was greatly persecuted by an ungodly husband, on account of her attachment to the Methodists. He absolutely forbade her attendance at the meetings, and used to fasten her in the house to prevent it. One good old custom which the preachers observed, was that of family worship with their host before leaving the house; and this was the favourable juncture that presented this woman with an opportunity of conversing and praying with her religious friends. To make her acquainted with the time of the performance of this exercise, a handkerchief was exhibited at the window as a signal, upon seeing which,

she would go over and join them. So precious was the Word of the Lord in those days!

Barnard Castle was soon taken into the Leeds circuit, and supplied with the labours of the travelling preachers stationed in it. This appears certain from the memoir of the venerable Matthew Lowes, who was called out into the itinerant work in the year 1751. "I was appointed," he says, "for Leeds circuit, which was then very extensive, reaching as far as the Dales; and notwithstanding we met with much opposition, yet the word was gladly received by many, and the persecution they suffered had the happy effect of uniting them firmly together. I well remember a remarkable watchnight we held at Barnard Castle. The power of the Lord was wonderfully displayed among the people, many were awakened to a sense of their sin and misery, and others obtained a knowledge of the remission of their sins, through faith in Christ Jesus. The meeting continued till a very late hour, it being with difficulty that the people could be persuaded to return to their own homes. The good effect of this meeting on the hearts and lives of those who were present, were manifested for a long time after."

Thus was effected the entrance of Methodism into this place; though the messengers were shamefully treated, yet God blessed their labours, and a Christian Church was raised against which the gates of hell were not able to prevail. Little information concern-

ing its earliest members can now be obtained, though some of them deserve to be had in remembrance. In addition to those already mentioned, we may record the names of Joshua Hammond, Jane Hammond, William Wilkinson, John Carr, William Jackson, Joshua Addison, Ann Linsley, and Francis Dunn, some of whom were leaders of classes. But their race has long since been run, "they now rest from their labours and their works do follow them." Humble and obscure as they might be in their day, overlooked and despised by those who knew not their real worth, their names cast out as evil, their goods spoiled and themselves maltreated, yet they cheerfully endured the peltings of the pitiless storm, braved the fury of the oppressor, and 'nobly for their master stood ;' and though no other record may be found of them amongst men, than the scanty memorial preserved in these pages, yet 'their record is on high,' they were the friends of God, and their names shall be perpetuated when those of the sons of earthly glory shall be written in the dust.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure,
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor."

CHAPTER III.

FIRST MEETING HOUSE.—PERSECUTIONS.

Methodism having thus obtained introduction into Barnard Castle, it soon became necessary to take active steps to secure its continuance by providing some convenient place for divine worship. Private dwellings were too small to contain the number who came to hear, and the urgent necessity of the case required that accommodation on a larger scale should be sought. It cannot have escaped observation that the original Meeting Houses of the first Methodists, were not placed in commanding situations where they could be seen of men, but were generally to be found in the lanes and alleys, or in the outskirts of our cities and large towns. This may have arisen in part from the humble circumstances of the members generally, not enabling them to purchase more eligible sites; but may principally be attributed to the desirableness of being out of the way of opponents, so much disposed to annoy them by every species of disturbance, when quietly met together to worship God. We are therefore the less surprised to find that the first Meeting

House in Barnard Castle was situated in a very obscure part of the town, adjoining the Crook land, at the head of a narrow lane or footpath, known by the name of the Hole-in-the-Wall. This we doubt not, was the identical "upper room," alluded to by Mr. Hanby in the preceding chapter. The building still exists, and to this day retains the name of the Old Meeting House, but it has passed through so many changes in its outward appearance, as to leave but slight indication of its aspect, at the time when it was thus appropriated. It seems to have been a rough unsightly edifice, capable of containing about one hundred and fifty hearers, and far from being substantial in its construction, as upon one occasion, whilst William Darney was preaching, the flooring of the upper room gave way, and precipitated some of the congregation into the apartment beneath. Some bruises were the result of the fall ; but no serious injury was sustained.

The venerable founder of Methodism paid his first visit to Barnard Castle, on Monday May 25, 1752, having spent the preceding day at Newcastle. He remarks in his Journal, "We rode to Durham, and thence through very rough roads, and as rough weather, to Barnard Castle," and it appears met with as rough reception, after he had arrived. "I was exceedingly faint when we came in, however the time being come, I went into the street and would have preached. But the mob was so numerous and so loud, that it was not

possible for many to hear. Nevertheless I spoke on, and those who were near listened with huge attention. To prevent this, some of the rabble fetched the engine, and threw a good deal of water on the congregation, but not a drop fell on me. After about three quarters of an hour, I returned into the house." The pipe of the engine it is said was under the direction of one Lionel Kipling, and that he designedly avoided playing on Mr. Wesley.* Mr. Hanby and his friends did what they could to stay this rude proceeding, but they were overpowered by the multitude. It deserves remark, that Mr. Wesley on this occasion, took his stand in the Horse Market, in front of the house where Joseph Garnett resided, on the site of which the Witham Testimonial has since been erected.

Mr. Wesley preached on the following morning, and remarks "Tuesday 26th, at five o'clock, the preaching house would not contain one half of the congregation, many stood at the doors and windows, far more than could hear. When I come again, perhaps they will hear while they may. We rode hence to Weardale." This was his first visit to that lovely dale.

We have hitherto marked the almost uninterrupted progress of the demon of persecution, in resisting the formation of this Christian Church. Human wisdom

* Mr. John Monkhouse is also mentioned as having seized the pipe of the engine, and endeavoured to divert the stream as much as possible.

would have calculated on its overthrow, as the people of God were neither considerable in number, nor influential in position; whilst their persecutors were many, and encouraged by some of the principal inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood: but God was in the midst of His Zion, and was a present help when the waters of persecution did roar and were troubled. The mob frequently assembled at the door of the preaching house, abused the congregation, and broke the windows. For a considerable time these mischiefs were borne with patience by the sufferers, who cheerfully contributed their little sums towards repairing the damages thus sustained. The most distinguished amongst the persecutors was William Temple; there were indeed many others equally violent in spirit, but Temple in this business was regarded as their champion. He was encouraged, as has been hinted before, by some who ought to have used their influence to restrain such proceedings; who to inspire him with the proper spirit for his diabolical work provided him with a gold laced hat, and procured for him a sword; thus equipped he paraded the streets, and sounding a horn, called the people together at his pleasure. But "He that sitteth on the heavens did laugh, the Lord had them in derision," and the time was now at hand, when he who saith to the raging sea, "be still!" suddenly arrested the boisterous waves, when at the height of their fury. A preacher of the name of William Roberts, having come

over from Newcastle, notice was given of his intention to preach in Galgate Street in the evening. At the appointed time, the mob assembled and interrupted him; at length, they pulled him down, and dragged him along the streets, threatening to throw him into the river. By some means he extricated himself out of their hands, and the darkness of the night favoured his escape; being a stranger in the place, he scarcely knew which way to run, but espying a light in a room, he made his way towards it, and to his surprise and joy found it to be Joseph Garnet's. The mob discovering his retreat, beset the house, and threatened to pull it down if they did not turn out the preacher. Some of the friends opened the window, and in a spirited manner gave them warning that in the morning application would be made to a magistrate, and a warrant taken out against them. Upon hearing this, they were intimidated, and after a while dispersed. The next day two of the Methodists, Francis Dunn and John Carr, waited upon the Rev. Mr. Emmerson, of Winston, and having acquainted him with their grievances, begged his advice how to obtain redress. He listened to their complaint, and told them that the laws of the land would protect them in the enjoyment of their religious privileges, and that if they would furnish him with the names of some of the principal offenders, he would grant them a warrant. They singled out Will Temple as the most proper character of whom to make an example ;

he was accordingly apprehended, and would have been committed to Durham Gaol, had he not found bail for his appearance at the assizes. When that time arrived he left the town in triumph, equipt in his usual style, and confident of obtaining a favourable verdict. The two individuals above mentioned, proceeded to Durham to prosecute ; and great was the anxiety of the poor Methodists with regard to the result of the trial, as their future security seemed to depend upon it. Temple on his arrival at the place, applied to a barrister to undertake his cause, but he candidly assured him that his case was a dangerous one, and that if convicted, he would probably be transported. This information greatly alarmed and humbled him, and seeing his case to be so desperate, he made submission to his prosecutors, and with tears in his eyes, begged them to stay further proceedings. Francis Dunn at first was inexorable to his pleadings, and turning a deaf ear to his entreaties, said to him, "nay we have thee now, and we will take care of thee." But it was too much for tender hearted John Carr, his bowels of compassion yearned over the culprit, and the prosecution was dropped on condition that the offender should pay all costs and expenses, and never more disturb their religious meetings. He came home greatly chagrined ; a crowd of people were anxiously waiting his arrival in Galgate, and calculating only upon a triumph, were promising themselves the gratification of a fresh attack

that night, upon the objects of their undeserved hate, but to their great mortification he announced that he had lost the day. The adoption of these measures proved salutary in arresting the progress of open persecution, and the pledge alluded to appears in general to have been redeemed, as I have not been informed that he ever afterwards attempted openly to disturb the preachers, except, that once, when a funeral sermon was about to be preached in the street, he drew up, and began to observe that these were the false prophets spoken of,—but John Carr reminding him of the proceedings at Durham, he walked off ashamed. His son Bartholomew was also a persecutor, and a notoriously wicked man, but was cut off in the midst of his days in a remarkably awful manner. As this circumstance produced a powerful impression upon the minds of the people, it may not be considered irrelevant to notice it here, although in the order of time the occurrence did not take place until about ten years after the period of which we are writing. This wicked wretch went one day in the month of November upon business into Baldersdale, and stayed till rather late in the evening. The night proving very tempestuous, he was strongly urged not to attempt to return, but would not be prevailed upon, swearing that he would go though the devil should stand in the gap : (alluding to a small gap or wicket-gate through which the road lay). He accordingly set off, but was found

next morning a lifeless corpse, having fallen over a scar into a pool of water, and broken his neck. The body was taken into a neighbouring outhouse, but whilst it remained there, the wind was so violent that the building was in danger of being overturned, and in the course of the night the thatched roof took fire. He was carried to Barnard Castle for interment, but such a tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, wind and hail came on, as had rarely ever been witnessed. Sometimes the car on which the coffin was placed was with difficulty moved, and at other times it appeared so light, that the horse was hardly restrained from running away with it. An unusual darkness prevailed, insomuch that some were obliged to light candles at noonday. As the funeral crossed the bridge such was the violence of the wind that the bearers to whose shoulders the coffin had been transferred, could with difficulty prevent its being borne over into the river. The bonnets and cloaks of his two daughters were blown away and never afterwards found. The rain poured down successively, so that the water ran in torrents, until the lower part of the town was flooded. As they moved up the street, a flash of lightning struck the coffin, and splitting the lid, so intimidated the bearers, that they twice set it down and fled. Arriving at the church, the clergyman would not suffer the funeral to enter, but proceeded at once to the grave, and though naturally a bold man, he

trembled exceedingly as he read the burial service. During the reading of that passage, "We commit his body to the ground, earth to earth," &c., the weather suddenly changed, the sky began to brighten, the sun to break out, and a fine calm evening closed the day. Strange as this narrative may appear, it rests not on the unsupported testimony of two or three solitary individuals, but on the authority of a considerable number of eye-witnesses. The account has repeatedly been confirmed to the writer, by several aged persons with whom he has conversed in reference to their recollections of the day, the bare mention of which seemed to awaken in their minds an instinctive horror and dread. We presume not to affirm, that this was a special indication of the judgment of God against a flagrant violator of his laws; in this light it was undoubtedly viewed at the time, "And great fear came upon as many as heard these things." And it is not unworthy of remark, that not a vestige of the family is left in the place, strikingly verifying the description of the end of the wicked man, depicted so vividly in the 18th chapter of Job, "His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings, they that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted." Of these persecutors generally, it may be added, that it has been

noticed by those who have watched the termination of their earthly career, that the major part of them did not die the common death of all men. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

The voice of open persecution being now hushed, the people of God began to enjoy peace in their borders, and were blessed with the ministerial labours of various servants of the Lord. Amongst others, the celebrated George Whitefield in one of his northern excursions visited them, probably about the year 1753 or 4. Upon his arrival at the place, he took his horse to an Inn, and enquired of the hostler if he could direct him to where any of the Methodists resided. The hostler repeating the term, replied that he had never heard of them. He then asked him if he knew no religious people.—"O, yes!" he replied, "there are the Lilty Pattens." This was an epithet of reproach applied to the good women, from the circumstance of their going to the meetings with their pattens on. He sought them out, and found that they were no other than the Methodists, though at that time not always designated by that honourable name. He preached in the evening in a yard behind Joseph Garnet's house, to a large congregation, who conducted themselves in an orderly manner. The passage selected for his text was Ezekiel 33, 11, "Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die," &c. Mr. Whitefield never repeated his visit to Barnard Castle.

The insertion of an original anecdote relative to this great man needs no apology. On one occasion as he was travelling in the North, Joshua Hammond went over to Bishop Auckland to enjoy the pleasure of an interview with him. As they were walking together in the Bishop's Park, Mr. Whitefield suddenly paused, and measuring the ground with a whip which he held in his hand, very seriously exclaimed, "twice the length of my whip, and once the breadth of it, will be the full amount of the Bishop's large possessions in a few years."

CHAPTER IV.

METHODISM IN TEESDALE.

By this time Methodism had been gradually making its way into the surrounding neighbourhood, especially into Teesdale. From its intimate connection with the work at Barnard Castle, we may very properly devote the present Chapter to a survey of some of the most prominent events connected with its origin in that romantic vale.

The time of its introduction into Teesdale may be regarded as nearly co-eval with that of its commencement at Barnard Castle, as it is stated that William Darney preached the gospel there about the year 1747. He was followed by two brothers from Allendale, Jacob and Matthew Rowell, who with some other local preachers from Derwent were early employed in this field of labour. Mr. Matthew Lowes was an honoured instrument of establishing this good work in the dale. It has been already stated that he was called out into the itinerant work in the year 1751, and appointed to the Leeds circuit, but in consequence of ill health, he was obliged to retire from active labour

within the first year of his itinerancy, In July 1753 he retired into Allendale for the benefit of his native air, and employed the five following years in preaching so far as he was able, in various places in the north, of which labours Teesdale was favoured with a good share. These excellent men were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor unwilling to labour with all their strength, in the gracious work to which their divine Master had called them, and for which he had qualified them, not so much by enabling them to preach with the enticing words of man's wisdom, as with the demonstration of the Spirit. Many of the people in Newbiggin and its neighbourhood were awakened, and began to search the Scriptures, a work to which most of them till that time had been almost altogether unaccustomed.

Mary Allinson was the first who opened her house to entertain the preachers, but was afterwards so far intimidated by the threatenings of her landlord as to be induced to shut her door against them. They then found shelter in the house of John Armstrong of Field head, but Low Houses being considered a more convenient place, William Coatsworth received and entertained them and provided a place to preach in. The spirit of persecution was not allowed to lie dormant in the dale. The Rev. Mr. Emmerson, the clergyman of the parish particularly distinguished himself in the ranks of the opponents, and at his instigation the in-

fluence of the Earl of Darlington was exercised to put an end to that spirit of enquiry and desire of salvation which had begun to prevail, and there can be little doubt that his Lordship's menials would puff with all their might at the then glimmering taper of Christianity, but they could not extinguish it—it still continued to burn, and with increasing lustre, and will do so till it shall be lost in the glory of an eternal day. In the meantime, all this opposition worked for good to the people of God ; for such of the lead miners under the Earl of Darlington as were dismissed from their employment, were soon engaged by Mr. Pratt, Steward to — Hutchinson Esq., and the mines proving rich, they earned considerably more money than under their former master. A person of the name of Bee at Beck Head, was actually turned off his farm because of his determined attachment to Methodism. Thus driven away by the hand of arbitrary and unsanctified power, he took refuge in Weardale, where the Lord who approved his conduct, rewarded his fidelity, and abundantly blessed him with the good things of this life. Further than this, it does not appear that there was ever much open persecution at Newbiggin. The servants of God had soon abundant cause for ascribing thanksgiving to Him who caused them to triumph ; and in His name they set up their banners, by the erection in 1759, of a Meeting House in Newbiggin, capable of containing two hundred hearers. The expense of this building,

which is still existing, did not much exceed sixty pounds, and subscriptions and collections to near the amount were soon forthcoming. The number of members in the dale at that time amounted to fifty eight, of whom the greater part belonged to Newbiggin and its neighbourhood. Amongst the earliest class leaders may be recorded the names of Thomas and Matthew Allinson, James Spence, Thomas Harrison, John Bainbridge and William Richardson.

The dales-men are a robust, hardy race, a type of primitive days, — plain and unsophisticated in their manners, — but firm and steady to their principles ; and where the grace of God had its hallowing and sanctifying influence, it has issued in the formation of a Christian character, which, rough hewn as it sometimes may appear, exhibits in no small degree, the divine power of the Gospel in renovating the inner man. The leaders just named were in some respects remarkable men ; without any of the advantages of educational training, they possessed good sound sense and sterling religious principle. Matthew Allinson * just referred to, was no ordinary character. He was the subject of religious impressions in early life, through hearing a dissenting preacher, whose ministry he attended for many years, though at a distance of sixteen or seventeen miles. But when Messrs. Hopper and Rowell entered the dales, he embraced them as the servants of

* See Methodist Magazine Vol. 30. p. 90.

the Most High God, and followed them over the rugged mountains to learn more fully the way of salvation. He joined the society at Newbiggin in 1751, and for fifty four years continued steadfast and faithful, acknowledged even by the enemies of Christianity to be "an Israelite indeed." In his last affliction, when visited by Mr. Claxton, (who was then stationed in this circuit) about two days before his death, as he approached his bedside, he caught him by the hand, saying "Brother Claxton, fifteen years ago I was to all human appearance as near the eternal world as you behold me now. A raging fever seemed to be commissioned to remove me and all my family into the eternal world, and two of my children died, triumphing in the Lord. At that solemn time my dear partner kneeled by my bed and poured out her soul unto God in strong cries and tears, when it seemed as if an angel spoke, 'I will add to thy life fifteen years.' The time is now expired—I am ready to be offered up—my work is done. Last night I had by faith, such views of glory as are unutterable: and I have felt since, such a deep sense of the presence and power of God, that I have no more doubt of glory than if I were in it. I feel in some measure already what it is to die, but my confidence in God is as a rock, it is too late for me to fear: God will not forsake me now." The following evening, a servant that had become pious through his instrumentality, and had known him as a man of God for thirty years,

desired him to take a little wine and water, after which he said, "I shall drink no more of the fruit of the vine, I know God will soon end my days of mourning, and wipe away all tears from my eyes." Then with all the strength he possessed, he exclaimed in the words of his favourite hymn,—

"The Church in her militant state,
Is weary and cannot forbear," &c.

The next morning, December 9th, 1805, in the seventy third year of his age, he gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren, giving a signal of victory over his last enemy. "Volumes" adds Mr. Claxton, "have been written on characters less eminent, for either genuine piety or true morality, but his record is on high and he shall be in everlasting remembrance."

William Richardson, another class-leader, was also proverbial for strict integrity of character, so that it became a common saying, "if there be a good methodist, old Willy Ritson is one." There was however one occasion when this high opinion of his trustworthiness was shaken. Arrangements had been made amongst the miners for a great cockfighting match, to take place at Middleton, between the Weardale and Teesdale main. Some of the combatants had to be sent from Manor Gill grove shop to engage in the bloody scene, but it became a question amongst the men as to the most proper person to be intrusted with such a commission, no little jealousy of each other being

entertained. A thought however darted into the mind of some individual more penetrating than his fellows, that if Willy Ritson could be got to take charge of them, they could not have a better man. They obtained his consent to deliver a bag, in which they had deposited the cocks, at a certain house in Middleton, without acquainting him with the contents. As he trudged along over the fell, the secret was betrayed by one of the chanticleers popping his head through a hole in the poke, and setting up a loud crow. Willy was no doubt at first a little startled, and indulging his soliloquising reflections, began to ruminate on the evils which his innocent companions would occasion; the cursing, swearing, gaming, &c., all presented themselves to his glowing imagination. But could it not be prevented by destroying the cause?—the thought was father to the deed:—he took them out, one by one, wrung off their necks, replaced them in the bag, and delivered it at the appointed house. As may be easily conceived, the fury of the cockfighters was unbounded, and in the first transports of their rage, his life was in no small peril.

The old Society Book for Newbiggin, commencing September 14, 1765, is still in existence, and is both a relic of the olden times and a literary curiosity! On the outside of the cover is the following not inappropriate quotation:—"Moreover they reckoned not with the men into whose hand they delivered the money to

be bestowed on workmen, for they dealt faithfully."
—2nd Kings, 12. 15.

SPECIMEN OF THE BOOK.

	Sept.			October.		
	11	18	25	2	9	16
Newbiggin Class,						
Thos. Allinson.	2 1	7	9	11	5	3 0
New House Class,						
Matthew Allinson	1	6	11	5	6	4
Forest Class,						
Thos. Allinson.		9	2 0	6		
Middleton Class,						
Wm. Richardson.			1 11	1 2		
Woodside Class.						
Thos. Harrison.	3 4	1 4	11	10		

The following are the first entries of disbursements :—

		s.	d.
1765.	Sept. 14, Francis Anderson 3 meals	0	9
	“ Josh. Fuddergill Hors one night	0	6
	“ Swaledale burial Samel. Meggot	6	0
	“ Allendale Thos. Carlill	6	0

The orthography, writing and entries, are sometimes amusing.

		s.	d.
Septemr. 19	Mr. Robertshaw 12 meals 4 nights	5	3
	do. a Shart washing		

This is a specimen of a succession of similar entries, from which it appears that a charge was made of 3d. per meal, 3d. for washing a shirt, and 6d. per night for the horse.

		£	s.	d.
1769, Jany. 21,	For Jacob before crossing Fell	0	0	6
1774, Oct. 28,	To Horses at quarter day	0	3	4
1775, Jany. 21,	To paid for a Crowdy	0	0	2
1779, June 19,	Benson's Cumpney *	0	2	3
“ Nov. 19,	To 1 busom	0	0	2
1778, Oct. 24,	Esq. Breckenbur † and man	0	8	6
1786, Oct. 14,	To Horsies at Lovefeast	0	10	0
1790, Oct. 16,	To Horses at Lovefeast	0	5	6

Middleton was a stronghold of the grand adversary of God and man. Here his goods were in peace, and wishing them to remain so, he stirred up his servants to do their utmost to drive away those people who were disposed in the name of Him who is stronger than the strong man armed, to spoil him of his goods. A number of them set out one evening to break up a meeting which was then assembled in a house situated at some distance from Newbiggin, and not far from the Middleton road. Breathing out threatening and slaughter they were met about half a mile from Middleton by an old woman, who having learnt the object of their journey, informed them that the Methodists were expecting a visit from them, and in anticipation of it, had prepared themselves with swords and fire arms, being determined to give them a warm reception. What motive the woman had for fabricating this story (for it was all false) is not known, but it certainly cooled

* The Revd. Joseph Benson and those who accompanied him.

† Robert Carr Brackenbury Esq., of Raithby Hall.

their courage, and concluding that the better part of valour is discretion, these heroes faced to the right about, and marched quietly home again.

On some other occasions however, they manifested more intrepidity, and a stronger determination of purpose. This was especially the case on a Whit-Sunday, supposed to be in the year 1752. A preacher of the name of Greenwood had come from Leeds, and intended to deliver his message from God in the street at Middleton ; but the mob being apprized of it, gathered together and sounded a beast's horn, threatening terrible things against the preacher. Matthew Rowell from Allendale being present, chose rather to endure the brunt of the attack himself, than that Mr. Greenwood who was a stranger should be exposed to it. He accordingly stood up in the forenoon, and commenced the service in the open air. The mob drew up, when one of them, a stout able-bodied man of the name of B——, attempting to seize hold of him, suddenly became powerless and began to tremble in every limb. Another, more resolute and determined then approached, cursing and swearing at them, for not having accomplished their purpose. He seized Mr. Rowell, and threw him into the street over a battlement, near the house in front of which he was preaching. They then dragged him down the hill (or as it is termed, the Hood) threatening to throw him into the water. One Peter Bainbridge looking on, and being seriously apprehensive of disastrous

consequences, though not himself connected with the society, hastily ran into his house, took down an old rusty sword, and sallied forth amongst the mob, to "smite with the sword." But the Methodists restrained him from making use of it, and advised him to put it up again into its place, and not attempt to defend the cause of God with such unhallowed weapons. Just at this juncture, when the storm was at its height, Joshua Hammond, Joshua Addison and a few other friends from Barnard Castle, unexpectedly made their appearance, having been induced to come to Middleton in consequence of a powerful impression made on the mind of one of them, by a dream the preceding night. They cheerfully offered themselves to the violence of the mob, that the preacher might be rescued. Joshua Addison especially, who was a man of little stature, lest he should be lost sight of in the crowd, several times leaped up, exclaiming, "I am one of them, I am one of them." The mob relinquishing their hold of the preacher, commenced an attack upon them; and after using them very ill, at length drove them out of the place, without their sustaining any serious injury, except that Joshua Addison had to lament the loss of his new hat. The principal persecutors, probably supposing they had been doing God service, after finishing their work repaired to the Church, and received the Sacrament; whether or not they were living "in charity with all men" they evidently thought it unnecessary

to examine. Mr. Greenwood preached in peace at Newbiggin in the evening.

At another time, when it was known that Jacob Rowell would have to pass through the town, a mob was raised and headed by some of the most influential persons in the place. He was escorted on this occasion by Messrs James and George Ainsley, who walked arm-in-arm with the heroic preacher, one on each side. A certain individual, on account of peculiar qualifications which he possessed for such an undertaking, had been appointed by the mob to begin the attack; and watching his opportunity, as the object of his hate was crossing a small brook, he ran and struck with all his force at Mr. Rowell's heels, intending to trip him up and prostrate him in the stream. Providentially however for Mr. R. though unfortunately for the persecutor, he missed his mark, and the first sight after the attempt, which was presented to the mob, was their champion lying on his back sprawling in the river; this was enough, he received such a ducking as damped his courage and confounded his associates, who left Mr. Rowell to pursue his journey uninjured.

Having adverted to the temporal prosperity of those, who, rather than violate their consciences, steadfastly adhered to the cause of God with the prospect of loss and deprivation, it may very properly be remarked by way of contrast, that the way of the persecutors in some instances seemed marked with the divine dis-

pleasure, and that "evil did hunt the violent man to overthrow him." The man above alluded to, a little while after this, had some property left to him near Stockton, but "the triumphing of the wicked is short," he died soon after taking possession. A son succeeded him and died also ; then his daughter, next a sister came into possession, and was quickly taken hence ; the property then descended to her family, which, though somewhat numerous, soon dwindled away till the race became nearly extinct.

Notwithstanding the opposition of earth and hell, the word of the Lord had free course. A house was provided for divine worship, near the place where Middleton House now stands: and though the heralds of salvation were often most shamefully treated, and frequently sustained personal injury from the attacks of their semi-barbarous opponents, yet the Lord hid them as in the shadow of his hand. Other instances of the fury of the persecutors might easily be added. At one time, being stimulated to action by twenty gallons of ale, with which two curates in their "zeal against innovation" had supplied them, the mob broke into the sanctuary, whilst the preacher was officiating, and pulling him down, dragged him out of the house, and threw him over a wall where they mercifully left him. At other times, they would pump a considerable quantity of water into the house, in which the people were assembled. Upon one occasion, a very zealous gentle-

man Mr. W———then resident in Middleton, having taken off his coat and armed himself with a bludgeon, went to the assistance of the sons of Belial, swearing most dreadfully that the Methodists should not take his land from him. His land has however long assisted in the support of Methodism, and in the very house in which he once resided, the preachers have been hospitably entertained, and the doctrines of our holy religion enforced ; but the instance itself presents a striking illustration of the ignorance that then prevailed respecting Methodism.

The Gospel was very early introduced into Lunedale, which may properly be noticed here, as it lies contiguous to Teesdale. The messengers of God found shelter in the house of Mr. Edward Raine of Wiseshill, where they delivered the glad tidings of salvation to the people. This good man was much persecuted by the inhabitants of the dale, but being of a meek and quiet spirit he cheerfully bore his cross, and his reward was with the Lord. One of the first subjects of the converting grace of God in Lunedale, was a man that was remarkable for a savage disposition, and especially distinguished by his cruel treatment of his wife, whom he was accustomed to beat in a very unmerciful manner. The Gospel was the instrument of softening his heart, and effecting a blessed transformation in his character, but before he had long had the opportunity of manifesting the reality of this change he was apprehended and

pressed for a soldier, sent out of the country and heard of no more. Upon the whole, God greatly blessed the labours of his servants in this hitherto uncultivated part of his vineyard with abundant success, and the wilderness became a fruitful field. In the course of this narrative we shall occasionally have an opportunity of returning to this interesting spot.

CHAPTER V.

THE DALES CIRCUIT.—GLORIOUS REVIVAL.

1757. THE preaching of the Gospel having been thus attended with success both in the town and neighbourhood, the ground was prepared for the formation of a regular Methodist Circuit. At this period there were probably not more than ten or twelve Circuits in the kingdom. From the large octavo edition of the Minutes of Conference, there would appear to be twenty two in 1749 ; but this is doubtless an error which has frequently puzzled the writers of early Methodistical history. Mr. Myles in his Chronological History of Methodism, has placed the same statement in the year 1763, which the Minutes have recorded under 1749 ; both cannot be correct—where then doth the truth lie ? Unquestionably, Mr. Myles is correct. It is not possible that there could be twenty two Circuits at that early period ; as in 1753, four years later there were only ten, as appears from a manuscript copy of the Minutes of that year, in the handwriting of Jacob Rowell, who was present at the Conference. Those ten Circuits are 1 London ; 2 Bristol ; 3 Devonshire ;

4 Cornwall; 5 Staffordshire; 6 Cheshire; 7 Yorkshire, or Leeds; 8 Haworth; 9 Lincolnshire; 10 Newcastle. This statement is exclusive of Wales and Ireland. The fact is, there is a chasm in the Annual Minutes from 1749 to 1763; and the questions and statements which are printed in the octavo edition as belonging to 1749, are more properly a compendium of several conversations which took place at various Conferences, which were held between those two dates.

In 1757 there does not appear to have been any regularly formed Circuit between Leeds and Newcastle, when Mr. Jacob Rowell was entrusted with the formation of the Dales Circuit, of which Barnard Castle was the Circuit Town, including Swaledale, Arken-
garthdale, Wensleydale, Teesdale, Weardale, Allendale, Alston, and Hexhamshire. A more judicious selection of a workman could not have been made. He knew the ground well; it had been the scene of his early labours, when, in the capacity of a Local Preacher, he first "went forth weeping, bearing precious seed," and only two years before, he had travelled in the Leeds circuit which then extended as far as the Dales.

He accordingly took up his residence in Barnard Castle, having recently entered into the marriage state with Miss Jane Hutchinson, of Wearmouth Shore. It is well known, that at that time no provision was made for a preacher's family; as good old Christopher Hopper said, "He that had a staff might take it, go

without, or stay at home ;” and from such a Circuit as this, in a state of infancy, little pecuniary aid could be expected. Hence most probably, the necessity of the case led Mr. Rowell to open a small shop, near the Market Cross in Barnard Castle, with an assortment of china, brushes, hats, tea, and other articles ; his wife managing the business at home, whilst he “in labours more abundant” was travelling his extensive round offering the blessings of the Gospel “without money and without price.” At the same time it appears from his Manuscripts in which sundry accounts and orders are entered, that he embraced the opportunity which the enlarged sphere of his labours presented, of disposing of the different goods which his Shop contained ; there being then no rule in Methodism, to prevent Preachers from increasing their income by trade.

In the midst of his unwearied toil Mr. Rowell had the affliction to lose the wife of his youth. She died at Barnard Castle, July 23rd, 1761, in the twenty fifth year of her age ; leaving behind, two children, one of whom in less than a year followed the parent into the world of spirits. From a few verses which were written by the heart-stricken man entitled “On the death of my wife—a mournful hymn,” we learn that she embraced the religion of Christ in her youth, regardless of opposition and reproach ; foregoing the pleasures of the world, she resolved to know nothing but “Jesus Christ and him crucified,” and bending

under the weight of multiplied sorrows, in the prime of life her immortal spirit winged its way to the realms of glory. Mr. Rowell, deeply as he felt his bereavement, pursued his work, acting according to the sentiment of Philip Henry "Weeping should not hinder sowing."

About the year 1758 a society was formed in a small village called Winton, across Stainmore's wintry waste. Richard and Mary Brunskill were amongst the first members in that dreary part of the Circuit. They were the children of pious Dissenters, and had themselves been brought to an experimental knowledge of God under the ministry of Mr. Ingham and his preachers, during an extensive revival of religion in that part of the country. A place of worship being much wanted, the new and zealous converts selected a situation central for that extensive neighbourhood, though remote from any town or even house; and here they erected what is still known by the name of Birk's Chapel. Hither many simple hearted people resorted every Sabbath morning, and in the summer season from places many miles distant. Mr. and Mrs. Brunskill with several others used to provide themselves with refreshment, which between the morning and afternoon services, they generally ate as they sat upon the ground; their horses in the meantime grazing beside them. By this means they contrived to hear two

sermons, which on account of the distance, they could not otherwise have accomplished. Peace and spiritual prosperity did not long continue in Mr. Ingham's society. Mr. Sandiman came from Scotland and sowed the tares of Antinomianism amongst them. Some received his doctrine, and introduced vain janglings and discords which caused many to stumble and fall. Mr. and Mrs. Brunskill amidst this terrible storm stood firm in the faith by which they were saved. A deputation waited upon Mr. Wesley at the Conference in 1758, to request that he would send his preachers amongst them. With this request he readily complied, and Mr. and Mrs. Brunskill gladly opened their doors to entertain them, and for upwards of forty years, gratuitously and hospitably received them under their roof. Agreeably to this arrangement they were visited by the travelling preachers in the Dales Circuit, once a fortnight. Mr. Rowell's Note Book, states that in 1759 and 1760, the number of members in Stainmore was ten, and the quarterly contribution four shillings, to four shillings and sixpence.

The excellent Vicar of Haworth, the Rev. W. Grimshaw, preached at Barnard Castle about this time. He proclaimed his message in the open air, very near the old Meeting House on what was then a common, and called the Crook. No particulars of his visit can now be ascertained: probably his intimate acquaint-

ance with William Darney, arising from that special good which he had received through his instrumentality might be the occasion of his visit.

We have no certain means of ascertaining whether Mr. Rowell had any colleague, or as it was then termed helper, during the period of his residence here. It is conjectured that William Darney was then in this neighbourhood, as he is so well remembered and spoken of, as one that occupied a prominent position in the early days of Methodism in this locality. His rough manner of preaching, and free-use of the most familiar comparisons, rendered him liable to the taunts and insults of those who attended the meetings only for sport ; hence they would attach opprobrious epithets to his name, calling after him as he passed along the streets. One morning when preaching at five o'clock, he coolly told the people he was not prepared with any subject, but recollecting himself for a moment, "Come" said he "we will hash up the cold meat : " (alluding to his sermon on the preceding evening), and he was led out in a more than ordinary manner, so that his hashed meat proved one of his choicest dishes.

Mr. Matthew Lowes also preached in Barnard Castle, Teesdale, Weardale, and Allendale, until 1758.

From the manuscript of Mr. Rowell we are enabled to furnish a statement of the number of members in the society, and the amount of quarterage received at Christmas Quarter, 1760.

		MEMBERS.		£	s.	d.
Barnard Castle	-	60	—	0	16	6
Teesdale	-	57	—	0	18	3
Weardale	-	34	—	0	8	6
East Allendale	-	44	—	0	11	6
Alston	-	31	—	0	11	0
West Allendale	-	22	—	0	8	0
North Tyne	-	18	—	0	6	6
Derwent Head-	-	9	—	0	4	0
Whittington	-	21	—	0	4	0
Hexham	-	20	—	0	7	0
Lune	-	12	—	0	3	6
Richmond	-	25	—	0	11	3
Newsham	-	12	—	0	5	0
Arkindale	-	14	—	0	5	0
Swaledale	-	39	—	0	14	8
		418		6	14	8

1761. A considerable improvement was now discernible in the moral conduct of the inhabitants; the leaven of the gospel was gradually diffusing its assimilating influence, and a general spirit of hearing was excited. This favourable change did not escape the observation of Mr. Wesley, on his second visit to Barnard Castle, which did not take place till this year. He says, "June 10, I took horse and reached Barnard Castle soon after six ; I preached at eight in a ground adjoining the town. Are these the people, that a few years ago were like roaring lions, they were now quiet as lambs, nor could several showers drive them away till I concluded."

Thus was his own observation made on his former visit realized ; “perhaps when I come again they will hear while they may.” This decided testimony of the venerable founder of Methodism to the improved moral condition of this once brutal people, whilst it marks an illustrious display of the efficacy of the Gospel in subduing the unholy passions of men, is at the same time an honourable tribute of respect to the zeal, diligence and undaunted courage of those men of God, who amidst such unpromising appearances, continued to labour on in the name of the Most High, till the fruit of their toil was made manifest.

1762. In the month of January, Mr. Rowell left this Circuit and went to travel in the Newcastle round. He entered a second time into the marriage state with Miss Elizabeth Simpson, of Swaledale. They were married at Middleton-in-Teesdale, May 15th, 1762, a further notice respecting them will appear in its proper place. At the Conference of this year, Mr. Samuel Meggot was stationed here, and was an honoured instrument of a glorious revival of the work of God. Mr. George Story, afterwards well known and deservedly esteemed in the Connexion, was appointed to be his colleague. He had recently been resident in Sheffield, and though admitted on trial at the Conference, was not able to complete the arrangement of his temporal affairs, so as to reach his circuit, until February, 1763.

It was at this period that the Society in London was in such a disturbed state, in consequence of the fanaticism of George Bell; and as this deluded individual had formerly belonged to Barningham, a village about six miles from Barnard Castle, his predictions excited more interest and attention in this part of the country, than they might otherwise have done. Mr. Story * remarks, "when I got to Darlington, the town was in an uproar, occasioned by George Bell's prophecy. That day (February 28th) according to his prediction, the world was to be destroyed. Many people were much frightened, but their fears soon gave place to resentment, and they threatened to pull down the house and burn the first preacher that came. However considering that God was all sufficient, I told Mrs. Oswald if she would venture her house, I would venture myself. Notice being given of preaching, the place was soon filled with people, rude enough. Providentially I found in the Newcastle paper, a paragraph, wherein Mr. Wesley disavowed all (further) connexion with Mr. Bell, and all credit to his prophecy. This I read to the people which instantly quieted them, and they attended patiently to the end of the Meeting." Mr. Oswald was a currier, in Clay-row, and appropriated his leather house, a small thatched cottage, with a mud floor, for the purpose of Divine Worship. Darlington had about this time been taken into the

* See Methodist Magazine, vol. 5, page 126.

Dales Circuit, and remained in connection with it until Midsummer, 1772, when it was transferred to Yarm Circuit. Its pecuniary contributions according to the Circuit book, varied from eight to twelve shillings per quarter.

These two excellent men, Messrs Meggot and Story, had not laboured long before the Spirit of God was poured out on the societies in this circuit in an extraordinary manner. One special means which God owned in this work, was the weekly observance of a day of fasting and prayer every Friday. Mr. Wesley in this journals, intimates, that the measure was adopted at the recommendation of Mr. Meggot, in consequence of the "exceedingly lifeless" state of the people; but the impression on the minds of those who have referred to this circumstance, is, that the Prayer Meeting originated in the alarm occasioned by George Bell's prophecy: the fact, most probably is, that Mr. Meggot perceiving the minds of many "moved with fear," seized the opportunity as a favourable one for arousing their attention to their immortal interests. The very first Friday they met, God broke in upon them in a wonderful manner. The neighbouring societies hearing of his, agreed to adopt the same rule, and soon experienced a similar blessing. Mr. Story enters into more particular detail concerning this interesting era of Methodism in Barnard Castle. He says, "In this circuit I found several societies of sincere people, but many

of them were settled upon their lees ; those who had obtained justification were resting in their past experience, and had little expectation of being saved from inward sin till death. I spoke strongly of full salvation, and God gave the word success. Several were stirred up to seek for purity of heart, and others were convinced of sin. Mr. Samuel Meggot was my fellow labourer, in whom I found the affection of a parent. Meeting one day in the dales, he said, ‘you must make haste to Barnard Castle, the people are all in confusion, six or seven of them have found full sanctification, and the rest are tearing one another to pieces about it.’ When I got to the town, I found many were not a little prejudiced against me, as a setter forth of strange doctrines. I attempted to preach amongst them, but could find no liberty. I met the society, but it was still the same. I was just going to conclude, when in an instant, the power of God descended in a wonderful manner. The assembly were all in tears, some praising God for pardoning mercy, and others for purifying grace, and even those who could not yet understand this new doctrine were constrained to say, ‘if we do not believe it we will never speak against it any more.’ The snare of the enemy was broken effectually, and from that time the work spread, not only through the town, but also in the neighbouring societies : we seldom had any meeting public or private, but some were either convinced, justified or saved from sin.’

The prayer meeting above alluded to, continued to be observed every Friday at noon, for several years afterwards.

Mr. Wesley came in time to be an eyewitness of the revival, and records some interesting particulars in his Journal.

“Monday, June 6th, I rode to Barnard Castle, and preached in the evening, but to such a congregation, not only with respect to numbers, but to seriousness and composure, as I never saw there before. I intended after preaching to meet the society, but the bulk of the people were so eager to hear more, that I could not forbear letting in almost as many as the room could hold; and it was a day of God’s power. They all seemed to take the kingdom by violence, while they besieged heaven with vehement prayer. Tuesday, June 7th, So deep and general was the impression now made upon the people, that even at five in the morning, I was obliged to preach abroad by the numbers who flocked to hear, although the northerly wind made the air exceedingly sharp. A little after preaching, one came to me who believed God had just set her soul at full liberty. She had been clearly justified long before, but said, the change she now experienced was extremely different from what she experienced then, as different as the noonday light from that of the day break, that she now felt her soul all love, and quite swallowed up in God.” Mr. Wesley desired Mr. Meggot to give

him some further account of the work at Barnard Castle. Part of his answer is as follows :

June 7th, 1763.

“ Within ten weeks, at least twenty persons have found peace with God, and twenty eight the greater salvation. This morning before you left us, one found peace, and one the second blessing: and after you were gone, two more received it. One of these had belonged to the society before ; but after he had turned back, bitterly persecuted his wife, particularly after she professed being saved from sin. On the 29th of May, he came in a furious rage to drag her out of the meeting. One cried out ‘let us go to prayer for him.’ Presently he ran away, and his wife went home. Not long after, he came in like a madman, and swore he would be the death of her. One said ‘are you not afraid lest God should smite you?’ He answered ‘no, let God do his worst ; I will make an end of her and the brats and myself too, and we will all go to hell together.’ His wife and children fell down, and broke out in prayer, his countenance changed, and he was quiet as a lamb. But it was not long before an horrible dread overwhelmed him, he was sore distressed. The hand of God was upon him, and gave him no rest day nor night. On Tuesday afternoon, he went to her who prayed for him, when he came to drag his wife out, begging her with a shower of tears to pray for his deliverance. On Thursday he wrestled with God, till

he was as wet all over with sweat, as if he had been dipped in water. But that evening, God wiped away his tears, and filled him with joy unspeakable. This morning, while brother Story was at prayer, God gave him a witness in himself, that he had purified his heart. When he was risen from his knees, he could not help declaring it. He now ran to his wife, not to kill her, but to catch her in his arms, that they might praise God, and weep over one another with tears of joy and love."

Thus did the wilderness and the solitary place bring forth fruit abundantly, and great would be the joy of those who were employed in gathering it. To Mr. Story especially, who was just beginning his itinerant career, it would be ground of peculiar encouragement. He left the round in July, 1764, and was followed by Mr. Thomas Carlill, a preacher whose abilities were very respectable, though his discourses were not always sufficiently guarded from the sallies of an exuberance of facetious wit. He preached the gospel nearly half a century, and died in the year 1801.

But whilst Mr. Story was called to other parts of the field, his colleague, Mr. Meggot, with whom he had fought hand in hand, and joined in the shout of victory, was unexpectedly summoned to put off the harness and receive the conqueror's crown. The messenger found him engaged in action, with his armour on, in the Swaledale part of the circuit.

• “His sword was in his hand,
Still warm with recent fight,
Ready that moment at command,
Through rock and steel to smite.”

So sudden was his death, that some friends from Barnard Castle, who had crossed the mountains expecting to hear him preach, arrived only in time to follow the remains of their beloved pastor, to his last earthly resting place in the churchyard of Grinton, near Reeth. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Carlill. Prior to their engaging in the itinerant work, they had resided in or near the same town in Lincolnshire, where Mr. Meggot had built a preaching house at his own expense for the use of the Methodists; this led Mr. Carlill to select for his text, “He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue.”

Mr. Wesley paid two visits to Barnard Castle in the spring of 1764. He says “Friday, April 27th, I preached at Darlington at noon, and at Barnard Castle in the evening; where many hearts were bowed down before the Lord.” His remarks on his subsequent visit, are more copious. “Tuesday, May 8th, we rode over the wild moors to Wolsingham. It proved to be a fair day, so I had hearers from all parts. In the evening I preached to the simple, earnest, loving people at Barnard Castle. If all to whom we preached were of this spirit, what an harvest would ensue. Wednesday, 9th, I was invited to breakfast by Mr. F. a neighbouring gentleman. I found we had been school-fellows at the Charter

House, and he remembered me, though I had forgotten him. I spent a very agreeable hour, with a serious as well as sensible man." This gentleman was Mr. Fielding, a magistrate, who resided at Startforth; though zealously attached to the established Church, his open recognition of Mr. Wesley manifested a liberal and an enlightened mind. His house, from this period, became the home of the venerable man, on his subsequent visits to this neighbourhood.

CHAPTER VI.

ERECTION OF FIRST CHAPEL.

1764. The society in Barnard Castle having received a considerable addition to its numbers, by means of the revival just adverted to, the members had soon reason to complain, of the old meeting house "the place where we dwell is too strait for us." It became therefore desirable to obtain one more suitable, but many formidable difficulties stood in the way. The tide of prejudice, ran high ; and the members themselves possessed but little of this world's goods, it has indeed been questioned whether more than one or two of their number had twenty pounds which they could call their own. But their hearts were set upon the work ; they knew the master whom they considered it their honour to serve, and thus encouraged, they commenced operations with vigour, and the result shews what may be accomplished by an union of heart and effort. A subscription was opened, to which each member was expected to contribute according to his ability, the poorest not less than a shilling. It is said that one individual of the

name of Greathead nobly subscribed thirty pounds ; a very handsome donation at that day, especially for one who was not himself a Methodist. A suitable piece of ground adjoining the Demesnes was obtained, and the property was conveyed by deed bearing date 22nd and 23rd February, from John Robinson to Agur Crampton, weaver, Hugh Railton, shoemaker, and John Williams, all of Barnard Castle. A quarry was opened on the very spot, and a plentiful supply of free-stone obtained for the erection of the building, here the men at the close of their daily business laboured diligently, in digging out stone for the Lord's House ; whilst the women, amidst many reproachful sneers from the bystanders, assisted by bearing water to slake the lime. Matthew Justice eminently distinguished himself, by his activity and zeal in the erection of the new Chapel. In addition to a liberal subscription, he contributed greatly by his personal labour ; scarcely allowing himself time for his regular meals, he was wont at noon day to repair to the Demesnes well, about 40 yards distant, there to partake of the crust of bread or any other refreshment he might have carried with him, as though he had adopted a resolution like that of the Psalmist, to give no sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, till he had found out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

In the meantime the enemies of the work viewed these proceedings with an evil eye. Notwithstanding

ing the arm of persecution was broken, the offence of the cross had not ceased ; the dread of the penalties of the law, indeed restrained them from open acts of violence, yet the poison of the old serpent in their hearts instigated them to stretch forth their hands secretly to do mischief; hence like Tobiah and Sanballat of old, they conspired together to hinder the work, frequently under cover of the night, pulling down the wall built on the preceding day, yet it went on and prospered, and in a short time a neat Chapel was erected measuring thirteen yards by ten, within the walls. This was an event unexpected by many. A certain gentleman passed by one day, and observing the progress that was making, sarcastically remarked in the spirit of the unbelieving Lord at the gate of Samaria, "I shall never see that an house." His remark was verified, in a way which he did not then anticipate ; the house was completed, but his eyes were first closed in death. And many others, looking at the comparative poverty of the builders, and the obstructions they met with, anticipated, that they should soon have to report, "these men began to build, but were not able to finish." They had however counted the cost, and having laid the foundation in the name of the Lord, persevered in their undertaking till the top stone was laid on with shouting.

Matthew Justice, was then a very active Methodist, and a zealous advocate for Christian holiness. Besides

what has been already mentioned, he afterwards made a donation to the society of a small plot of ground adjoining the chapel, upon which a dwelling house for the preacher's residence was erected. It is however to be lamented, that his zeal did not continue to burn with a steady and increasing flame, but became languid. He contracted an imprudent marriage, which involved him in many difficulties, and diminished his property. It is hoped that in the end, he died in the Lord.

1765. This year witnessed the opening of the chapel, and the venerable founder of Methodism was the first to sound the trumpet of the everlasting gospel within its walls. He says, "Saturday, April 13th, we rode through much wind and rain to Barnard Castle. In the evening I preached in the new preaching house, (not opened before) and at eight in the morning. I would have preached abroad on Sunday evening, but the weather drove us into the house. And God was there, both to invite sinners and to comfort believers. Afterwards I spent an hour with those, who once believed they were saved from sin. I found here, as at London, about a third part who held fast their confidence, the rest had suffered loss, more or less, and two or three were shorn of all their strength."

The expiring flame of persecution was still fanned by the minister of the parish. The opposition made by the incumbent, when Methodism was introduced

here, has already been noticed. That individual was now no more, and the Rev. Joshua White had succeeded to the curacy about the year 1760. He also, in imitation of a practice too generally pursued in those days, inveighed severely in his sermons against the Methodists. On one occasion he indulged his splenetic spirit to a very unjustifiable extent, by singling out Mr. Thomas Dixon, who had joined the society, and publicly reproving him at the sacramental table; and the next time he attended, he absolutely forbade his coming again, for no other crime than his connection with the Methodists. This fact is inserted on the authority of Mr. Dixon's own testimony, and it reflects no great credit on those professedly spiritual pastors who did all in their power to drive away the flock from their fold, and then accused them of leaving it.

At the Conference this year, Messrs Rankin, John Ellis, and Robertshaw were appointed to the Dales circuit. It is to be regretted that so little information has been preserved, relative to the first race of labourers in the field of Methodism; many have been suffered to drop into oblivion, who deserved to be 'had in everlasting remembrance.' An enlarged account has been published of Mr. Rankin, in the second and thirty-fourth volumes of the Methodist Magazine. John Ellis was an affectionate and laborious servant of Jesus Christ, a plain, upright, honest man. His sermons were dis-

tinguished by simplicity ; but were oft accompanied with divine power to the hearts of the people, he was mighty in prayer ; but his chief excellency was in the gift of exhortation. Many stout hearted sinners, whilst he was exhorting them, felt the force of the word, and were constrained to turn to God. He walked closely with God, and was greatly respected by the people among whom he laboured. His death occurred at Worcester, on January 5th, 1772. On the Christmas day preceding, he had opened a chapel there, and dwelt much upon the uncertainty of life, particularly observing respecting himself, that he never laid down to sleep without expecting to awake in the eternal world. On Saturday, January 5th, he retired to his room, and was soon heard to fall on the floor. Mr. Lewty at whose house he was, went up and found him breathing his last. He had only a few days before, settled his affairs. Such was the esteem in which he was held at Worcester, that many of the people went into mourning.

Mr. Robershaw was also a man of an excellent spirit and laboured long and acceptably in the vineyard of the Lord. Mr. Rankin states, that he found his fellow labourers were worthy, steady and useful men, with whom he laboured in love, and with some degree of prosperity in the circuit. The period of their ministry was however attended with some unhappy circumstances at Barnard Castle. Mr. Rankin was a strict disciplinarian, and a strenuous advocate for the doctrine of

perfection, and he pressed these points home so closely, that some of the members took offence, and the fire of discord was kindled. Mr. Wesley was written to upon the subject and he sent Mr. Hanby to endeavour to extinguish the unhallowed flame, and restore peace. A division in the society was, after all, the consequence, and the separatists established meetings amongst themselves. The form of Class meeting was observed and weekly contributions paid, which were expended in purchasing the Revd. Charles Wesley's hymns, some of which they regarded as favouring their sentiments. But in a few years they dwindled away.

The Dales Circuit comprised at this period, parts of the five northern counties, extending from beyond Hexham on the north, to Swaledale on the south, and from Darlington on the east, to near Penrith on the west. Its first circuit book is still preserved and presents many points of interest to a Methodist antiquarian. It records twenty two places whence the quarterly contributions were sent; seven of which are now circuit towns. The whole amount of these contributions, did not exceed nineteen pounds, and three men with horses had to be maintained. The quarterage of a Preacher, was three pounds, and his travelling charges about five shillings per quarter. The first item, under the head of disbursements is generally a charge of one guinea, more or less, for dinner! this of course is the dinner provided on the day of the

quarterly meeting, which was numerously attended by stewards and friends from distant parts of the circuit, and concluded by a love-feast and watch-night.

It was during the latter part of this year, that this circuit had the honour of sending out from one of its remote corners, one of the most illustrious men that ever adorned the Wesleyan connexion, the Rev. Joseph Benson. He was born at Melmerby, in Cumberland, and in the 17th year of his age, was truly converted to God, joined the society at Gamblesby, and very soon began to preach. As a Christian—a minister—and a divine—he occupies a very eminent station in the Church of Christ, and his Commentary on the Old and New Testament alone, will at once perpetuate his name and extend his usefulness to future generations. It is, quite unnecessary in a record like the present, to make any lengthened observations on the life and labours of this extraordinary man, already so ably delineated by his distinguished biographers; indeed from the distance of his residence from Barnard Castle, it is exceedingly difficult to gather any original information. One reminiscence however of his preaching has been handed down and is worthy of record. When addressing a large congregation in Weardale, from that striking passage in Daniel 5, 27—"Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting;" as he proceeded in the course of his sermon to weigh different characters, as they presented themselves to his glowing imagination, when he came

to the covetous man, with all the energy of his soul, and at the top of his peculiarly shrill voice, he cried aloud "Help ! men and brethren help ! He is so fast glued to the world, I cannot get him into the scale." The effect was electrical, and those who heard never forgot it.

1766. Mr. Wesley arrived at Barnard Castle, July 1st. He says, "I rode on to Barnard Castle and met the stewards of the societies, greatly increased since I was here before. At six, I preached in an open space, adjoining to the preaching house. As the militia was in the town, the far greater part of them attended, with a large congregation from town and country. It rained most of the time I was speaking, but I believe hardly six persons went away. At the Lovefeast which followed, several spoke their experience, with all simplicity. One poor mourner was set at liberty, and many greatly comforted." The day following he preached in Teesdale and Weardale.

Methodist preaching was by this time introduced into many small places in the neighbourhood, principally through the instrumentality of local preachers who were raised up about that period. It is very probable that Joseph Garnet was the first who began to exercise his talents in this way ; he was followed by Christopher Watkins and Thomas Dixon, who cheerfully went up to the help of the Lord, and were owned with some success in their labour of love. By this means, many villages which could not have been reached by

the travelling preachers, in consequence of the extent of their circuit, were thus visited by these disinterested and laborious men, and the truth as it is in Jesus, though in a plain and humble style, proclaimed by them. Stainton, Cleatlam, Whorlton, Newsham, Barningham, and Cotherstone were early visited. At Newsham the preachers were entertained by Nicholas Coverdale, who was soon called to his reward, witnessing in death a good confession.

The local preachers came in for their share of persecution: the rude villagers, often countenanced by him to whom they looked up as their spiritual guide, were ready to signalize themselves as the brave defenders of the religion of their fathers, and the avowed opponents of innovation. A case in point has been related by Mr. Dixon himself. On the occasion of his first visit to Whorlton, he stood up in the street to preach, (for no one would let him have an house.) The minister of the parish, a very stout man, came up and enquired his business there? Mr. D. replied "to preach the gospel," "But you shall not" he rejoined, "I am the minister of the parish, and am properly licensed by the bishop". After a few more observations, he turned to the people, spread his arms, and drove them before him like a flock of sheep, adding "If you will preach they shall not stop to hear you." Mr. D. however gave out a hymn, and two or three friends who accompanied him began to sing, whilst the minister retreated

to the alehouse, a place to which he too frequently resorted, left them in quiet possession of the field. The people again gathered up, and Mr. D. preached to them in peace, and published his intention to be there the next fortnight. He went accordingly with his friends ; the day was rather wet, and some young men had charged themselves pretty freely with liquor, that they might be able to disturb the preacher with the greater boldness. After the worship had commenced with singing and prayer, the disturbers attempted to annoy the people by pelting eggs amongst them, but their opposition was ineffectual, and the preacher, however contrary to their wishes, was able to go through with his discourse. After leaving the place on their return homewards, Mr. D. looking back, beheld these bold champions pursuing them, so that he perceived that there was some danger of his falling a victim to their rage. He encouraged his friends to stand and face them, and in this position they stood till their opponents came up. One young man in particular, with fury depicted in his countenance, approached with his clenched fist towards Mr. D., as though he was bent upon knocking him down. "What do you want with me?" demanded the intrepid preacher. "Do you mean to take away my life? or rob me upon the highway?" The young man immediately shrunk back, and softly answered "no." After a little more conversation with him, he became quite calm ; the rest of

his companions also shook hands with the preacher and his friends, and bid each other good night ; so did God at this time turn these lions into lambs. The spirit of God wrought powerfully on the mind of the young man above alluded to, and about a fortnight afterwards, he went to hear Mr. Dixon at another place, and was deeply affected under the word. He became very friendly with the preacher, and accompanied him to another appointment in the evening, full of good desires.

At the Conference, Mr. Rowell was re-appointed to the Dales circuit, Mr. Robertshaw continued a second year, and Mr. Thomas Halliday was their colleague. We have scarcely any record of the last mentioned individual. Some idea of his character may be formed from the following extract from a letter to Mr. Wesley from Mr. John Smith, dated Newry, January 3, 1768. "I bless God, and thank you for my fellow labourer, in Christ, Thomas Halliday, for no man is of use to this round, but such as neither fear men nor devils, and has no thought about what he shall eat, or what he shall drink ; and is willing both to spend and to be spent for the glory of God, and the increase of the church of Christ." He only travelled half a year in the circuit, and was succeeded by Mr. Joseph Harper.

1767. Mr. Rowell was re-appointed along with Mr. William Brammah, a plain honest man, of deep piety and great zeal. His preaching talents were very

slender, but he had many seals to his ministry. Mr. Wesley used to say respecting him, "that he had but one talent, that of directing sinners to Christ now." It was a proverbial expression, "Hear William Brammah once, and you hear all he has got to say, let his text be what it may." His wife Alice was also very zealous and useful in conducting prayer meetings. Michael Fenwick was their fellow labourer. His ministerial qualifications were small, and he was generally considered a weak man. He was a studious imitator of Mr. Wesley in his dress, manners, and penmanship. He courted popularity, and took a little honest pride in introducing himself to the notice of the great. He appealed by letter to Mr. Pitt on the subject of the tax on preacher's horses, specifying the usefulness of the preachers, and obtained a general exemption from the tax. When, in this circuit, appeals had to be made for special aid for any of the funds, Mr. Fenwick took great pleasure in waiting upon such of the nobility as resided within his sphere, and his applications were cheerfully responded to. No doubt, in connection with his other peculiarities, he had studied the politeness of Mr. Wesley.

During the course of this year, Mr. William Hunter having been recommended by Mr. Rowell at the London conference, was called out into the circuit. He was an upright man, a pattern of neatness, and deeply pious ; "spotless, sincere, without offence."

Some particulars of his life appear in the 2nd volume of the Magazine, and of his death and character in the 21st volume, page 26. During the time of his residence in this circuit, a violent persecution was commenced against the Methodists at Wolsingham, and so turbulent were their opposers, that Mr. Hunter was under the necessity of applying to a magistrate for protection. The magistrate was a man of infidel principles, yet though he feared not God, he listened to his complaints, and having searched into his books, said he could grant him redress, and that if he would furnish him with the names of the principal rioters, he would issue a warrant against them. This was immediately done. In the mean time some of the rioters had applied to another magistrate, and obtained a warrant for the apprehension of the preacher, which they served upon Mr. Hunter before he had the opportunity of executing his. Accordingly, the parties prepared to appear before the bench at Wolsingham, and a mighty stir was raised. The magistrate to whom Mr. H. had applied, as he proceeded along the streets, through the midst of the noisy mob, called out to them "come along with me, you rascals, and I will transport you all." When the business came on, he decidedly espoused Mr. Hunter's cause, so that the other magistrates tauntingly asked him, "what, are you going to turn Methodist?" He expressed his determination to see justice done, and laid down the law, explaining the

nature of the crime, and the punishment to which the rioters were liable. Having then enquired of Mr. Hunter, if he wished the law to take its course, and to proceed with a prosecution against them ; Mr. H. replied that he did not wish this, but that he should be satisfied if the offenders paid the costs which had been incurred, and entered into security to keep the peace in future. The terms were gladly acceded to, and the case dismissed. The magistrate who had in this upright manner vindicated the cause of Methodism, then rose from his seat, exclaiming, "now I will preach you a sermon ; I do not believe the doctrine of eternal damnation, that God will punish a man for ever in hell, for the sins he may have committed in the space of fifty or sixty years." Mr. Hunter perceiving the drift of his discourse, hastened away with his friends, through the crowd as fast as possible, and heard no more, either of the sermon or its effects.

1768. Mr. Wesley preached at Barnard Castle on his way to the north, he says, "June 1st., I preached in Teesdale. The sun was scorching hot when I began, but was soon covered with clouds. Many of the militia were present at Barnard Castle in the evening, and behaved with decency. I was well pleased to lodge at a gentleman's, an old schoolfellow, half a mile from the town. What a dream are the fifty or sixty years that have slipped away since we were at the Charter house."

After visiting Swaledale, he writes "Friday 3rd, In running down one of the mountains yesterday, I had got a sprain in my thigh, it was rather worse to day, but as I rode to Barnard Castle the sun shone so hot upon it that before I came to the town, it was quite well. In the evening the commanding officer gave orders that there should be no exercise, that all the Durham militia might be at liberty to attend the preaching. Accordingly we had a little army of officers as well as soldiers, and all behaved well. A large number of them were present at five in the morning. I have not found so deep and lively a work in any part of the kingdom as runs through the whole circuit, particularly in the dales that wind between those horrid mountains."

The scanty allowance which in the primitive days of Methodism the preachers received for the support of themselves and families, affords ample evidence of the disinterestedness of their minds, and the purity of their motives. In addition to the keen edge of persecution which they had to encounter, and the sacrifices of domestic comfort, which they were called to make, in having to leave their families for weeks and months together, they were "in hunger and thirst often, in cold and nakedness." But the love of God sweetened all their toil, they sought not temporal things but the souls of the people, counting not their lives dear unto

themselves, so they might win souls to Christ, and finish their course with joy.

We insert here an extract from the Dales circuit book, shewing what we presume to be the full amount of quarterly income to the preachers in those days, with the exception of such provision for man and horse as they received when out in their circuits, no other allowance for board being then established.

COLLECTIONS, MIDSUMER, 1768.

					£	s.	d.
Barnard Castle	-	-	-	-	2	19	3
Barnigham	-	-	-	-	0	10	6
Richmond	-	-	-	-	0	5	3
Hudeswell	-	-	-	-	0	10	0
Reeth	-	-	-	-	0	8	6
Bladess	-	-	-	-	1	18	5
Arkindale	-	-	-	-	0	11	6
Teasdale	-	-	-	-	2	3	2
Weardale	-	-	-	-	2	5	6
Alston	-	-	-	-	0	11	3
Melerby	-	-	-	-	0	14	6
West Alendale	-	-	-	-	0	14	3
East dito.	-	-	-	-	0	18	6
Hol houss	-	-	-	-	0	11	0
Whittinton	-	-	-	-	0	9	6
Wolsingham	-	-	-	-	0	9	0
Grange	-	-	-	-	0	15	0
Darlington	-	-	-	-	0	12	0
Stainmoor	-	-	-	-	0	8	6
Lune	-	-	-	-	0	8	6
Wensedale	-	-	-	-	0	5	0

	£	s.	d.
Winton - - - - -	0	5	0
Bishop Auckland - - - - -	0	8	0
	£19	2	1
* In the Steward's hand - - -	£3	17	11

DISBURSMENTS MIDSUMMER.

	£	s.	d.
To Diner and letters - - -	1	0	0
" Mr. Rowell and Family - - -	5	15	0
" Mr. Bramer and Wife - - -	5	15	0
" Mr. Hunter and Wife - - -	4	6	0
" Mr. Fenick - - - - -	3	5	0
" Mr. Rowell to the Conferance - - -	2	2	0
" Intrist - - - - -	0	6	0
" Mr. Bramer for the docket - - -	1	1	0
" Mr. Rowell balence for his horse - - -	2	12	9
" Mr. Bramah's House Rent - - -	1	5	0
	£27	7	9
The book in debt to the steward - - -	£4	7	9

July the 29th 1768. Jacob Rowell.

The above is a verbatim extract from the Circuit Book, without any alteration in the orthography ; and the extent of the circuit, may be estimated from the names of the places, by those who are acquainted with the locality.

* The balance in hand, from the previous quarter.

CHAPTER VII.

MESSRS GARNET, WATKINS, AND DIXON.

1768. At the conference of this year, Mr. Richard Boardman was appointed to the Dales circuit. His ministerial talents were of a respectable order, and his appointment was regarded as a great privilege. During the winter he had the affliction of losing his excellent wife * by death. She was a woman of genuine piety, but during her last illness, her mind was painfully exercised with severe temptations and distressing fears. A little before her death she was entirely delivered from all doubt and anxiety, by the powerful application of these words to her mind, "thou shalt die in peace." This was a word in season,—the cloud burst,—the light of eternity broke in upon her soul and she triumphantly exclaimed "I am now satisfied, I shall die and be happy for ever." In this heavenly frame she continued till her dismissal was signed, and without a struggle fell asleep in Jesus, January 27th, 1769. Mr. Rowell came over from Yarm, and preached her

* See an account of her death, *Arminian Mag.* vol. 5, page 472.

funeral sermon from the above passage, Jeremiah 34.

5. This estimable minister having deposited the remains of the dearest object of his earthly affections, together with those of an infant child in the church yard of Barnard Castle, with so many ties less to earth, went to the following Conference at Leeds, and when the question was proposed by Mr. Wesley, who amongst the brethren would respond to an invitation received from New York, and go over the Atlantic? Mr. Boardman, along with Mr. Joseph Pilmoor stood up, and volunteered his services for that important mission. The two brethren were at once accepted. Seventy pounds were subscribed at the Conference, fifty of which were to be appropriated in liquidation of the debt on the chapel at New York, and twenty pounds towards their travelling expenses ; and thus equipped they went forth as the two first Missionaries appointed by the Conference, to declare in a foreign land the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Mr. Boardman after spending a few years in America returned to his native land, and resumed his itinerant labours, greatly to the satisfaction of the people where his lot was cast, but was suddenly removed to the world of spirits by a fit of apoplexy, at Cork, in Ireland, in 1782, in the forty fifth year of his age. He is depicted by Mr. Yewdall, who preached his funeral sermon, as an excellent and useful preacher, a kind friend, and of an engaging and amiable dispo-

sition, his life devoted to the service of God, and employed in promoting the salvation of souls.

His fellow labourers were Mr. Hunter and Joseph Garnet, who has already been frequently mentioned in this narrative, and who was this year called out into the itinerant work, and appointed to this circuit. He travelled about four years in the connexion, and finished his course in Lincolnshire, in 1773. His death was occasioned by sleeping in a damp bed. He was a truly pious man ; as he walked with God in life, so he was not deserted by him in his latest moments, but was enabled to triumph over his last enemy, and his end was peace, quietness, and assurance for ever. Mr. George Robinson of Langham Row, at whose house he died, thus notices him in a letter addressed to Mr. Wesley:—" There has been a stir amongst the people ever since that dear man of God Joseph Garnet died at my house. His dying prayers are about to be answered. I think myself highly favoured that I had him five weeks before he died." Thus was one of the first fruits of Methodism in Barnard Castle safely gathered home to the garner of God, in the fifty fourth year of his age.

In the course of this year, another member of the society at Barnard Castle, Christopher Watkins, was called to a more extended sphere of labour, in the itinerant work. He was sent to Ireland where he remained two years, and was then stationed in the

Dales circuit. He travelled for many years in various parts of this country, and in Scotland and Wales, but during the latter years of his life was obliged to retire as a supernumerary, his health being much impaired through his arduous labours. His preaching talent at the commencement of his career was but small, nevertheless his labours were in many places crowned with success. He died triumphant in the faith in Somersetshire, in the year 1805, after having preached the gospel about forty years. The following honourable testimony respecting him is recorded in the Minutes, —“ He was a man of God, and zealous to promote his glory in the salvation of immortal souls. In this work he was engaged from the age of eighteen years, till bodily diseases rendered him unable to continue longer in it. He laboured under some severe afflictions for many years, but patiently endured them all. For the space of about two months before his death, he was confined to his house, during which time he was very happy in God, and rejoiced much in sure and certain hope of the glory to be revealed. He often said that all his hopes of heaven depended only on the redemption by Jesus Christ, frequently repeating those words,

“Thy blood and righteousness I make my only plea.”

A few days before his death he said to a friend, “O what a precious Saviour is Jesus ! a precious Prophet ! a precious Priest ! a precious King ! yea, He is alto-

gether precious." The day before his departure, he said to a friend who came to see him, 'happy ! happy !' Here his voice failed him, but recovering himself a little, he said, 'I hope to be soon with Jesus.' After this he spoke no more, and died a witness of the doctrine he had long taught, viz., that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'

In the spring of 1769, a third messenger of salvation was called forth from the Barnard Castle society, Thomas Dixon. As no particular account of the life of this excellent man has been published, a few sketches of his early and eventful labours will be the more interesting. He was a stone mason, as he often avowed in referring to by-gone days, and was converted to God in the twentieth year of his age. He received his first serious impressions under the preaching of Mr. Carlill and Joseph Garnet, and was deeply awakened one night at the house of Joshua Hammond, at which he had been invited to spend the evening, after his return from a prayer meeting. Before parting, prayer was proposed, and whilst Jane Hammond was pouring out her soul to God, he shook and trembled, and the burden of his sins became intolerable. He went to Christopher Watkins who was at that time a class-leader, and intreated to be taken into the society. Mr. Samuel Meggot gave him his first ticket, and he went on his way weeping, till God manifested himself unto his soul, and gave him an inward assurance that he had

redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all his sins. He soon began to labour publicly for God, by endeavouring to institute prayer meetings in those places in which he had been accustomed to spend his vacant hours in sin and folly, in order that those who had shared with him in sin, might be partakers together with him of the grace of God. In the course of a little time he began to act as a local preacher, generally preaching two or three times on a sabbath day, and travelling twenty miles on foot; sometimes walking ten or twelve miles on a Sunday morning over the moors, to preach at seven or eight o'clock.

At the age of twenty three, he unexpectedly received a letter, under Mr. Wesley's authority, from Ireland, desiring him to go to the Tandragee circuit. He conferred not with flesh and blood but about the end of April, 1769, went in the name of the Lord. Here he entered upon a scene of arduous labour, privation and suffering, often travelling fifty miles in a day, and having no friendly house of refreshment on the road, he was glad to let his horse graze on a hill whilst he ate a little biscuit out of his pocket. Nor were his accommodations (if we may use the term,) much better at his journey's end. A poor Irish cabin, built of sods, clay and straw, and covered with rushes, potatoe tops, &c., furnished him a shelter, under which to take up his night's lodging, whilst his general diet was potatoes

and a little sour milk. None of these things however extinguished the fervour of his zeal, but he cheerfully pursued his work. Besides this, he was "in deaths often" from the fury of the persecuting mobs, who would probably have considered they were doing God service, had they taken away his life. One fine evening at Portadown, he took his stand in the street to offer Christ to a lost world, as the Lamb of God that taketh away their sin. An old veteran in the army of Satan sallied out of his shop, grasping the cross bar with which he was wont to fasten his shop door, and rushing forward with great rage, began to beat the people so unmercifully that their lives were in imminent danger. His aim seemed to be to reach the preacher, but the congregation interposed to prevent it. Mr. Dixon seeing no possibility of proceeding, in order to prevent the effusion of blood, stepped down from the horse block on which he had been standing, and retired into a house where he finished his discourse. Some of the people being hurt, Mr. D. with one or two of his friends applied to a neighbouring magistrate, who, instead of manifesting any disposition to restrain such lawless proceedings, replied in a surly tone, "you had no business there, if they had killed you I would have had nothing to do with it;" and thus this Gallio drove them from the judgment seat. They then applied to another gentleman who received them with the greatest politeness, and having heard their complaint said, "I

suppose you only want peace and protection;" they told him that was all they required ; " then, said he, I will be over at Portadown in a few days, and will see about it ; and if after that you are disturbed, come to me, and I will take your examination and you may prosecute them." They returned very thankful for the reception they had met with, and were disturbed no more.

On another occasion, attempting to preach at Enniskillen, one Sunday evening, a neighbouring justice of the peace, Mr. Carlton, breathed out threatenings against him, in consequence of which, a mob composed principally of Papists was raised, who made great disturbance. Mr. Dixon however confiding his cause in the hands of Him who "rides upon the stormy sky," after singing and prayer, began to preach. Presently the constable came up, and told him that he must go with him before the magistrates. Mr. D. replied that he had no objections, but should wish first to finish his discourse, to which the constable consented. He then requested him to make peace in the house, for the mob had by this time broken the windows, and accordingly the man did his best to bring them to order. When the service was concluded, Mr. D. proceeded with the constable to the house of the magistrate, whom they found with another gentleman enjoying themselves over a bottle of wine. Upon the enquiry being made "who are you?" Mr. D. replied, "some people call me a methodist preacher, others a swaddling preacher,

but I am a preacher of the gospel. He next asked where he came from, his business there, and if he was one of the Irish clergy? Mr. D. answered, "that he came from England, that his business was to preach the gospel of Christ to poor sinners, and that he belonged to the connexion of the Rev. John Wesley." He then said, "you talk of the spirit, and of inspiration?" Mr. D. acknowledged this, and was attempting to defend his doctrines, when the gentleman became quite angry, and loaded him with railing accusations. He next required bail for his appearance, which though offered by a friend present, he immediately refused, saying, "I will take no swaddler's nor seceder's bail for you, but I will send you to jail." Mr. D. taking shelter under the Act of Toleration, required him to administer the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, but the magistrate declined, saying, that he would prosecute him under the Vagrant Act, only it was not a proper night, being Sunday. He then ordered the constable to take him away, put a bolt upon him, keep him all night, and bring him up again in the morning. The poor constable trembled, but Mr. D. cheerfully consenting to go, they walked out into the passage, where the constable left him for a little time, and returned to the room. Upon his coming again, Mr. D. requested him to open the door, and clear a way through the mob, that he might follow him. Having done so, the mob poured in on all sides, crying

“what is to be done with the swaddling preacher ? Is he to go to the jail ?” His conductor then led him into the street, and holding out his hand, wished him “good night,” leaving him in the midst of a tumultuous rabble amounting to about four hundred people, who pushed him about, pelted him with stones, and roared and shouted as though they were taking a city by storm. Mr. Dixon however found his way to the house of his host, and went up stairs to obtain refreshment, but the mob soon burst in, and filling the kitchen and stairs, threatened violence. He at once desired a young man who had accompanied him, to make ready the horses, and ride down the street, choosing rather to deliver himself into their hands, than that the house of his host should be damaged. With this purpose Mr. D. opened the room door, and those who had filled the stairs, retiring before him, the place was soon cleared. On reaching the front door, the mob turned up the street to the right hand, and Mr. Dixon’s road being in the contrary direction, he walked on, down the hill to the left, the young man following with the horses. His opponents however discovering their mistake, returned at full speed, swearing they would take his life. But their haste was so great, and the descent down the street so steep, that some of the leaders falling, others in the dark fell over them, and Mr. D. and his friend taking advantage of the confusion thus created, mounted their horses, and rode off

unhurt. Thus did the God in whom he trusted, deliver him from these lions, when humanly speaking no way of escape seemed to be open.

Mr. Dixon after spending three or four years in Ireland, was sent to Scotland, and thence to Wales, and subsequently travelled in many of the circuits in the north of England. His preaching talents were of a respectable order, but an unpleasant method of delivery, and an apparent impediment in his speech stood in the way of his being popular. He was at length obliged to retire from the regular work, and took up his residence at Stockton, where he employed himself in preaching according to his strength, visiting the sick, conducting prayer meetings and assisting in any department of the work of God, in which he could be useful. His zeal for the glory of God continued to burn with an even and undiminished flame; the welfare of Zion lay near his heart; and the condition of sinners perishing in their iniquities has often rested with such weight upon his mind that his sleep has departed from him. Even the frost of old age, chilled not the fire of his quenchless zeal. When in the pulpit in his latter days, as he has warmed with the subject of his discourse, he has given expression to the emotions of his heart, in language like this—"if I were a young man of eighteen, and had the health and strength of a young man of eighteen, I would take my staff in my hand, and travel through England, Ireland and Wales, to preach the

gospel of Christ." The cause of Methodism was peculiarly dear to him ; and his diligence in attending the annual District Meetings, together with the earnest attention he gave to the varied business that came before the brethren, manifested his undying attachment to that body of people, to whose service his life had been devoted, and his anxious desire, that the beneficial influence of Methodism should be perpetuated. After having for more than half a century, preached the gospel of his Lord and Saviour, his happy spirit, suddenly took its flight to glory, December 11th, 1820. His remains were brought to Barnard Castle and rest in the churchyard, waiting the resurrection of the just. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Mr. Dixon was a valuable labourer in the vineyard of the Lord ; and his general character was marked by uprightness and integrity. Mr. Henry Moore in speaking of him in Conference, observed, that one of his frequent expressions relative to any business that was before them was, that every thing should be done 'fair and square,' and, added Mr. M., "he was one of the most 'square and fair' men that I ever knew." Mr. D. was the late Dr. Newton's first Superintendant, who ever entertained the most affectionate remembrance of his kind and fatherly regard towards him, when just setting out on his ministerial career. When visiting Barnard Castle on missionary occasions, as he frequently did, he was accustomed to seek out the spot where the

remains of his venerated superintendant were deposited, and would hang over the grave with the tendèrest emotions of Christian feeling.

At the Conference of 1769 Messrs Matthew Lowes, James Miller, Lancelot Harrison, and John Wittam, were stationed in the Dales Circuit. Mr. Lowes has already been referred to. He was born in the parish of Whitfield in Northumberland, and was awakened in early life under the preaching of Mr. Merrick. He very soon gave himself up to the work of the ministry. Obligated like many of his brethren, by the meagre allowances of those days, to devise some expedient by which to augment his scanty income, he prepared an excellent Balsam, which obtained great celebrity, and is still sold by the name of Lowes' Balsam. Several of the first preachers as well as himself disposed of a considerable quantity of it, and he no doubt found the profits arising from this source to afford a seasonable relief for the wants of a dependent family. At the Conference in 1770, a stop was put to this trade by the following rule, then passed, "that no preacher who will not relinquish his trades of buying and selling cloth, hardware, &c., or making and vending pills, drops, balsams, or medicines of any kind, shall be considered as a travelling preacher any longer." Mr. Lowes in 1771 retired from the work in consequence of severe affliction, and from that period resided in Newcastle, where he continued to preach as long as he was able, till his death, which

took place February 8th, 1795. A more circumstantial account of his life and labours is to be found, in the 18th volume of the Methodist Magazine.

Mr. James Miller, was little known in the connexion. He was a married man, a native of Scotland, and had been unfortunate in business. Mr. Wesley compassionating his case, called him out into this Circuit, but he did not travel long. Messrs Harrison and Wittam were many years engaged in the itinerant work, and died in a good old age.

During the course of this year, the venerable John Nelson travelled round the Circuit. He was then stationed at Newcastle, and Mr. Lowes, whose family resided there, exchanged with him for a month. He has been described as a stout broad shouldered man, but so much disabled by long service and honourable scars received whilst fighting the battles of the Lord, that suffering under a considerable degree of lameness, he was compelled to lean upon a man's shoulders for support, whilst preaching. This probably would be the case where there was no pulpit. He died in 1774.

About the beginning of this year (1769), the first gallery in the new chapel at Barnard Castle was erected, fronting the pulpit. The circumstance which led to this was a little extraordinary, and the hand of providence was acknowledged in it. A man in the neighbourhood of Richmond, with whom the members of society here had no particular acquaintance, with-

out any application being made to him, generously offered to advance them the sum of forty pounds wherewith to build a gallery, for this he would take no security, and required no return except the payment of interest during the term of his natural life. Such a handsome proposal was gladly accepted, the gallery was soon raised, and some of the most respectable persons in the place began to attend the chapel.

1770. Mr. Wesley arrived about the end of May, but no particulars are recorded in his journal, he merely states, "Tuesday, 29th and the following days, I took a little circuit through Weardale, Teesdale and Swaledale."

CHAPTER VIII

METHODISM IN WEARDALE.

1771. Mr. Rowell was re-appointed to this circuit along with Messrs. Hunter and James Watson. They were three blessed men of God, all of them according to Mr. Wesley's testimony, enjoying the blessing of perfect love, God owned their labours in a wonderful manner, so that before the end of the year the society amounted to upwards of one thousand members. The principal scene of this revival was Weardale, to which locality, we shall throughout this chapter principally refer ; adverting first to some leading circumstances connected with the introduction of Methodism into that lovely vale.

In the latter end of 1748, Christopher Hopper, who was then residing in Allendale, and had just commenced preaching in various parts of the north of England, resolved on a missionary excursion to Weardale. Hopper was "a prince and a great man in Israel." Dr. Clarke * (who knew him personally) says "he was a noble fellow,

* See Everett's "Adam Clarke portrayed."

and possessed of a strong mind," and in confirmation of his own opinion, adds that of Mr. Alexander Knox who said of him, "Mr. Wesley talks of his preachers, look at Christopher Hopper ; he was in the strictest sense a great man ; one who, with proper advantages might have become a first-rate man in any official situation. It is by such men that methodism will be perpetuated." Probably no single individual broke up a larger tract of waste ground than he. Dr. Clarke enquired of him once, how the early preachers proceeded in opening out new fields of labour. He replied, "our plan was to visit a town or village, and ask permission to expound the word of God in one of their houses or cottages ; if the people did not invite us to lodge and break bread with them, after repeating our visit two or three times, we took it as an indication, that we were not called to such a place." He then referred to an excursion made by himself, and Mr. Alex Mather, on Alston Moor. Having visited one place, and no entertainment for either man or horse being offered, they discontinued going. "Proceeding to the next village, an old woman came out from a small cottage, and stretching forth her withered arms, blessed us in the name of the Lord Jesus, invited us into her humble dwelling, and spreading before us her whole stock of provision, which consisted of three apples and five potatoes, she bade us welcome, saying that had she possessed more, we, as the ambassadors

of Christ, should have been welcome to it. I looked at Mr. Mather, and told him it was a token we were called to that place, eating and drinking according to the Apostolic plan, when we were asked; there we preached and there a society was established."

Mr. Hopper thus details his first visit to Weardale* in company with some of his friends from Allendale. It was in a storm of snow, that we crossed the quagmires, and enormous mountains. When we came into the Dales, we met with a very cold reception. The enemy barricaded the place, and made his bulwarks strong. But the Lord made way for his truth. He opened the heart of a poor Scotch shepherd to receive us into his little thatched cabin, where we lodged all night. The next day I preached under the walls of an old castle.† A few children and two or three old women attended, who looked hard at us. When I had done, we followed them into their houses, and talked freely to them in their own language, about the kingdom of God. They heard and obeyed the gospel. The next evening, I had a large congregation, who heard with much attention, and received the word gladly. Sometime after, I preached in private houses, alehouses, cockpits, or wherever I could find a door open. The fire then spread from heart to heart and

* See Arminian Magazine, Vol 4., page 88.

† Near to West Gate.

God was glorified." John Brown of Tanfield Leigh, a plain local preacher, of whom we have frequent mention in Mr. Wesley's Journals, preached in Weardale about the same time.

"At Christmas, * 1749, two young men of Allendale, determined to visit Weardale. Before they entered it they knelt down on the snow, and besought the Lord that he would incline some to receive them into his house. At the first house where they called, they were bade welcome, and stayed there four days. Many were convinced and some converted to God. They made several more visits during the winter: one of the young men was Jacob Rowell." His companion is said to have been Matthew Lowes, and their hostess was Jane Watson, who was brought to God during the revival of 1772. Mr. Rowell and others visited the Dale several times during the winter, and in a few months, twenty lively steady people were joined together. At the time of the formation of the Dales circuit, they had increased to thirty-five; under the revival, by means of Samuel Meggot, they had reached to eighty, but afterwards declined to sixty-three. The commencement of the work now to be recorded was this. William Hunter and James Watson, men not of large gifts, but zealous for Christian perfection, by their warm conversation on the subject, kindled a flame in some of the leaders. These pressed others to seek

* See Mr. Wesley's Ecclesiastical History Vol 4., page 268.

after it, and for this end appointed meetings for prayer ; the fire then spread wider and wider, till the whole society was in a flame. Mr. Wesley thus details the progress of this extraordinary work. “ Last summer * the work of God revived, and gradually increased till the end of November ; then God began to make bare his arm in an extraordinary manner. Those who were strangers to God, felt as it were a sword in their bones, constraining them to cry aloud. Those who knew God, were filled with joy unspeakable, and were almost equally loud in praise and thanksgiving. The convictions that seized the unawakened were in general exceedingly deep, so that their cries drowned every other voice, and no other means could be used than the speaking to the distressed one by one, and encouraging them to lay hold on Christ, and this has not been in vain. Many that were either on their knees, or prostrated on the ground, have suddenly started up, and their very countenances shewed that the Comforter was come. Immediately, these began to go about from one to another, of those that were still in distress, praising God, and exhorting them without delay to come to so gracious a Saviour. Many who to that hour, appeared quite unconcerned, were thereby cut to the heart, and suddenly filled with such anguish of soul, as extorted loud and bitter cries. By such a succession of persons mourning and rejoicing, they

* See Mr. Wesley's Journal.

have been frequently detained, so that they could not part till eleven o'clock at night, many sometimes not till morning."

The following artless account was drawn up by one of the leaders.—“On Sunday afternoon December 1st, as Wm. Hunter was preaching, the power of God fell on the congregation in a wonderful manner. Many being cut to the heart, cried aloud for mercy, and ten were added to the society. On Tuesday evening we met again at six, but could not part till ten. In this time four found peace with God, and ran from one to another exhorting them to believe in Christ. On Wednesday night many were deeply distressed, but none set at liberty. While we were meeting on Thursday, two were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. On Saturday night we met at six, and three of us sung and prayed; but before the third had done his voice could not be heard for the cries of the people. Seven of these arose blessing and praising God, and went about encouraging others. Many hardened sinners were much affected thereby, and begun to cry as loud as they had done; so that we had nothing to do, but stand and see the wonderful work of God. And oh! how dreadful, yet pleasing was the sight! All this time many were crying for mercy; among these were four young men, who remained on their knees five hours together. We endeavoured to break up the meeting at ten but the people would not go; so that

we were constrained to continue till twelve. Near this time, one was asked, ' what he thought of this !' He answered " I wish it be all real ! " He then turned to go home ; but after taking a few steps began to cry aloud for mercy. He cried till his strength was quite gone, and then lay as one dead till about four o'clock in the morning, then God revealed his Son in his heart. During this meeting eleven persons found peace with God.

" On Sunday morning we met at the common hour, and three of us sung and prayed as usual, till our voice was drowned by the thanksgivings of the new converts and the cries of convinced sinners ; among the rest, an ancient woman was so struck, that she vehemently cried out ' mercy ! mercy ! O what a sinner am I ! I was the first that received them into my house in Weardale and have heard them almost these thirty years, O pray for me, mercy ! mercy ! ' It was not long before she found mercy, and mightily rejoiced in God her Saviour. And about the same time another mourner passed from death unto life."

" We met again at two, and abundance of people, came together from various parts, being alarmed by some confused reports. We sung and prayed, and the power of God descended. A young man, who had been deeply wounded in the morning, now found one mighty to heal. We then concluded, but many of the people came in again, and others stayed at the door.

Among those who came in, was one who had been remarkably profligate. He cried for mercy with all his might ; several crowded about to see him, and before we parted, not only he, but five more were rejoicing and praising God together. We met again on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and by that time nine more found peace."

"Mr. Rowell came, stayed three days, and joined many new members. Three and thirty of these had found peace with God, as did five more in the week following. When Mr. Watson came, he joined many more, eleven of whom were justified. At our meeting on Tuesday, eleven more were filled with the peace of God ; yet one young man, seemed quite unconcerned, but suddenly the power of God fell upon him ; he cried for two hours with all his might, and then the Lord set his soul at liberty. On Saturday a few met at Mr. Hunter's room, who were athirst for full sanctification. For this they wrestled with God, till a young man found the blessing, as several others have done since. Above a hundred and twenty are added to the society, more than a hundred of whom are believers."

Mr. Hunter, who was an honoured instrument in this work, has furnished the following concise summary of it.

"We had such a work of God in several parts of this circuit as I never saw. Hardly anything of the

kind hath exceeded it in England, both with regard to its swiftness and depth; the power of God bore down all before it, and it seemed as if God was about to convert all the world."

Mr. Wesley arrived in the summer, and rejoiced in this revival. "June 2nd. We rode to Newbiggin in Teesdale. The people were deeply attentive but I think not deeply affected."

He then directed his face to Weardale. Never perhaps did he ascend 'the famous Pike Low' with such pleasurable emotions. No doubt the news of this glorious work had been wafted towards him on the wings of fame, and now he was about to see for himself. He thus proceeds, "From the top of the next enormous mountain, we had a view of Weardale. It is a lovely prospect. The gently rising meadows, and fields, on both sides of the little river, clear as crystal, were sprinkled over with innumerable little houses, three in four of which, if not nine in ten, are sprung up since the Methodists came hither. Since that time the beasts are turned into men, and the wilderness into a fruitful field."

"It being very cold, I judged it best to preach in the house, though many of the people could not get in. Just as I began to pray, a man began to scream, and that so loud, that my voice was quite drowned. I desired he would contain himself as far as he could, and he did so tolerably well. I then applied the

Woman of Canaan. The people devoured every word.

“ Wednesday 3rd, I desired to speak with those who believed God had saved them from inward sin. I closely examined them, twenty in all, ten men, eight women and two children. Of one man, and one or two women, I stood in doubt. The experience of the rest was clear ; particularly that of the children, Margaret Spence, aged fourteen, and Sally Blackburn, a year younger. But what a contrast was there between them ! Sally Blackburn was all calmness ; her look, her speech, her whole carriage were as sedate as if she had lived three score years. On the contrary Peggy was all fire ; her eye sparkled ; her very features spoke ; her whole face was all alive ; and she looked as if she were just ready to take wing for heaven ! Lord let neither of these live to dishonour thee ; Rather take them unspotted to thyself !

“ In the evening I preached on ‘ open thy mouth wide and I will fill it ; ’ and indeed God confirmed his word. There was a cry on every side, but not like that last night : this did not damp, but quicken the rest, especially the children ; many of whom mourned for God, but some rejoiced with joy unspeakable. About twenty of them, steady and consistent, both in their testimony and behaviour, desired to join with their elder brethren in the great sacrifice of thanksgiving. A few were then also constrained to cry out ; but the greater part enjoyed ‘ the silent heaven of love.’

“Thursday, 4. At five, I took my leave of this blessed people. I was a little surprised in looking attentively upon them, to observe so many beautiful faces as I never saw before in one congregation, many of the children in particular, twelve or fourteen of whom (chiefly boys) sat full in my view ; but I allow, much more might be owing to grace than nature, to the heaven within that shone outwardly.”

The feelings of this venerable leader of the hosts of Israel, upon this occasion, appear in a light truly enviable. Whilst he viewed this work in its glory, a work, which under God, he was the great instrument of originating, it almost seems as though age recoiled the sprightliness of youth, and wherever he looked, on the fields, the houses, the congregation, the children, all seemed full of heaven.

Mr. Wesley left John Fenwick to examine the Society, one by one, this he did on Friday and Saturday, his report is as follows :—“ On Saturday evening, God was present through the whole service, but especially towards the conclusion ; then one and another dropped down, till six lay on the ground together, roaring for the disquietude of their hearts. Observing many to be quite amazed at this, I besought them to stand still and see the salvation of God. But the cry of the distressed soon drowned my voice, so I dismissed the congregation ; about half of them went away. I continued praying with the rest, when my

voice could be heard ; when it could not, I prayed without a voice, till after ten o'clock. In this time four of these poor mourners were clothed with the robes of praise. The society now consists of a hundred and sixty five members ; of whom there are but twenty that have not found peace with God. Surely such a work of God has not been seen before in any part of the three kingdoms. Forty three of these are children, thirty of whom are rejoicing in the love of God. The chief instrument God has used among them, is Jane Salkeld, a schoolmistress, a young woman that is a pattern to all that believe. A few of her children are Phæbe Featherstone, nine and a half years old, a child of uncommon understanding. Hannah Watson, ten years old, full of faith and love. Aaron Ridson, ten years old, but wise and stayed as a man. Sarah Smith eight years and a half old, but as serious as a woman of fifty. Sarah Morris, fourteen years of age, is as a mother among them, always watching over the rest and building them up in love. Mention was made of four young men, who were affected on the second Wednesday in December. These hearing of the roaring of the people, came out of mere curiosity. That evening six were wounded and fell to the ground, crying aloud for mercy. One of them hearing the cry rushed through the crowd to see what was the matter. He no sooner got to the place, than he dropped down himself, and cried as loud as any. The other

three pressing on one after another, were struck just in the same manner ; and indeed all of them were in such agonies that many of them feared they were struck with death. But all the ten were fully delivered before the meeting concluded, which indeed was not till four in the morning."

"Jane Colling had been a hearer for twenty years, but was not awakened till at a prayer meeting last winter, she was cut to the heart. It being Sunday, the meeting should have ended at nine, but through her distress it continued till nearly twelve. She was then hardly persuaded to go home. In the evening she returned, but was dead as a stone ; so she continued all night ; but the next day God revealed His Son in her heart.

"Edward Farles had been a hearer for many years, but was never convinced of sin. Hearing there was much roaring and crying at the prayer meetings, he came to hear and see for himself. That evening many cried to God for mercy. He said he wished it was all real, and went away more prejudiced than before, especially against the 'roarers and criers' as he called them. But soon after he got home, he was struck to the ground, so distressed, that he was convulsed all over. His family fearing that he would die, sent for some of 'the praying people.' For some hours he seemed to be every moment on the point of expiring in deep agony, both of body and mind. He then lay as quite breath-

less. But about four in the morning, God, in a moment, healed both soul and body. Ever since he has adorned the gospel." Thus for John Fenwick. We have extracted these statements the more freely, because the greatness of this special work of God justifies a minute detail, and no testimony can be more satisfactory than that of those who were eye witnesses. Mr. Wesley enters largely into a comparison between the revivals at Weardale and at Everton; and after tracing their resemblance in the unexpected beginning of the work, the swiftness of its progress, the numbers wrought upon, the outward symptoms that attended it, and the instruments employed, he gives a decided preference to the former. Mr. Wesley further admires the Weardale society, for their liberality in making provision for their preachers, and their prudence with respect to marriage, in being influenced in their choice not by money but virtue.

We shall afterwards have occasion to notice the progress of the work in Weardale in connection with the subsequent visits of Mr. Wesley; but it may not be improper at this stage of the history to annex a statement of the numbers in society, extracted from the manuscripts of Mr. Rowell. The account appears to have been taken prior to the Conference of 1773. In the corresponding column, is inserted the number at the time when Mr. R. entered upon the circuit in 1770, so that we have at one view the extent of the round, and the progress of Methodism in the respective places.

Number in 1770.	Names of places.	Number in 1772.
110.	Barnard Castle.	113.
8.	Cotherston.	13.
14.	Lunedale.	12.
80.	Teesdale.	83.
16.	Richmond.	16.
14.	Hudswell.	10.
10.	Wensleydale.	8.
90.	Swaledale.	84.
32.	Reeth.	23.
33.	Arkindale.	38.
14.	Barningham.	19.
20.	Stainmore.	15.
17.	Soulby.	19.
30.	Melmerby.	31.
33.	Alstone.	39.
18.	West-Allendale.	25.
35.	East-Allendale.	45.
14.	Hole-house.	16.
7.	Tedham.	14.
109.	Weardale.	266.
26.	Wolsingham.	40.
17.	Grange.	15.
10.	West Auckland.	8.
7.	Cleatlam.	4.
15.	Sawhouse.	} Hexhamshire. 20.
11.	Newam.	
13.	Whittington.	
12.	Stainton.	"
15.	Windlestone.	"
29.	Darlington.	"
"	Long Martin.	7.
"	Brecken Hill.	19.

 Total 864.

 Total 1002

Thus it appears that the little one had become a thousand. The cloud, at first in appearance as a man's hand, continued to shower its fertilizing influence, and spread its rich blessings over hill and dale. Well may we enquire in the spirit of gratitude and admiration, "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT !"

CHAPTER IX.

SWALEDALE.

1772. After our pleasing excursion into Weardale, where lovely and cheering sights of verdure and fruitfulness on the hills of Zion met our attention on every side, the first circumstance that presents itself to our observation on our return to Barnard Castle, awakens sentiments of a more solemn and impressive character. Whilst the Great Head of the Church was in a more distant part of the circuit increasing the number of believers abundantly, here, his care over his children was not the less visible, in the gathering home of some of the ripest fruit to his garner above. That devoted saint of God, Jane Hammond, was about this time removed to the world of glory. A mother in Israel had she been to the infant society in this place, eminent for sincere piety, and fervent zeal, but now she was called to rest from her labours. Her funeral sermon was preached in the street, agreeable to a custom generally observed here in the primitive days of Methodism. The scene was rather imposing, but deeply impressive. The coffin being placed on two

chairs in front of the dwelling of the deceased, the preacher was wont to take his station behind it, and thus conduct a service peculiarly solemn, and well adapted to arrest the attention of the most thoughtless. The preacher selected on this occasion, was the venerable Jacob Rowell, who improved the mournful event from 2nd Timothy, 2nd Chapter, 11 and 12 v. "It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer we shall also reign with him." This it may be observed, was the last time that a funeral sermon was thus preached in the open street.

Mr. Wesley in the visit referred to, in the last chapter, preached at Barnard Castle, before he proceeded to Weardale. "1772. June 1st, I preached at the end of the preaching house to a large congregation of established Christians." The spot selected for this exercise was a large open space of ground, particularly favorable for out-door preaching, on which, many, with whom the writer has conversed, recollect his having frequently preached. He adds, "at five in the morning the house was nearly full of persons, ripe for the height and depth of the gospel."

At the conference this year, Messrs. Robert Swan and George Mowatt were appointed to the Dales. The former was a native of Scotland, and is remembered as a tedious, monotonous preacher, with a singing tone. Yet lengthy as his sermons were, his matter was so

copious, that he frequently had to preach them at twice. Both of these brethren laboured long in the work, and died at a very advanced age. Mr. James Watson was their colleague for about three months, when he was succeeded by James Hudson, who did not travel long in the connexion, but retired from the work in 1777, and it is thought became a Clergyman of the Church of England. Prior to his coming, Mr. Wesley had told the friends that he would send them a man that was a Methodist all over; but they thought he failed to answer that description.

1773. Mr. George Story was again appointed to the circuit, with Christopher Watkins, our old townsman, Michael Fenwick, and Nicholas Manners. The last mentioned individual was considered to be possessed of considerable talents, and was the author of some small treatises. He left the connexion in 1784. The general state of the work in the circuit was far from presenting that prosperous aspect which it had recently done, and when Mr. Wesley again visited the societies in the north, he exceedingly regretted the declension in Weardale. His report stands in mournful contrast with that of his preceding visit; "then, was his mouth filled with laughter and his tongue with singing;" now, he hangs his head on the willows, and seems to weep, as he thinks upon Zion. After leaving Newcastle, he says, "Saturday, June 11th, I set out for the Dales. About noon I preached at Wolsingham, and in the

evening, near the preaching house in Weardale." "Sunday 12th, the rain drove us into the house both morning and afternoon. Afterwards I met the poor remains of the select society, but neither of my lovely children, Peggy Spence nor Sally Blackburn were there. Indeed a whole row of such I had seen before, but three in four of them were now as careless as ever. In the evening, I sent for Peggy Spence and Sally Blackburn. Peggy came, and I found she had well nigh regained her ground, walking in the light, and having a lively hope of recovering all that she had lost. Sally flatly refused to come, and then ran out of doors. Being found at length, after a flood of tears, she was almost brought by force, but I could not get one look, and hardly a word from her. She seemed to have no hope left ; yet she is not out of God's reach.

I now enquired into the causes of that grievous decay in the work of God, which was here two years since, and I found several causes had concurred. 1. Not one of the preachers that succeeded, was capable of being a nursing father to the new born children. 2. Jane Salkeld, one great instrument of the work, marrying, was debarred from meeting the young ones ; and there being none left, who so naturally cared for them, they fell, heaps upon heaps. 3. Most of the liveliest in the society were the single men and women ; several of these in a little time, contracted an inordinate affection for each other ; whereby they so grieved the

Holy Spirit of God, that he, in great measure departed from them. 4. Men rose among themselves, who undervalued the work of God, and called the great work of sanctification, a delusion, by this they grieved some, and angered others, so that both the one and the other, were much weakened. 5. Hence the love of many waxing cold, the preachers were discouraged, and jealousies, heart burnings, evil surmisings, were multiplied more and more. There is now a little revival ; God grant it may increase !”

On Tuesday, June 13th, Mr. Wesley preached in Teesdale, and thence proceeded to Swaledale and Wensleydale : but before we extract his report of these places, we shall introduce a few particulars connected with the beginning of the work there.

Wensleydale is allowed to rank with the first, in scenery, of our northern valleys. The richness and luxuriance of the land, the beauty of its winding river, its woods and cataracts, and the bleak mountains in the distance, all combine to attract the admiration of the traveller. Mr. Wesley paid his first visit here October 30th, 1743, very probably at the invitation of the Rector of Wensley, the Rev. Mr. Clayton, an old fellow collegian at Oxford, and one of the little company there that met together for reading the scriptures and prayer. On the Sunday morning Mr. Clayton read prayers in Wensley Church, and Mr. Wesley preached, on “ What must I do to be saved ? ” showing the impossibility of

entering heaven without inward and outward holiness. The astonished villagers wondered at the strange man's face, and no less at the strangeness of his doctrines. As Mr. W. returned through the churchyard, they were engaged in high debate to determine what religion he was of. Some said, he must be a Quaker ; others an Anabaptist ; till at length one more deeply learned than the rest, brought them all over to his opinion, that he was a Presbyterian Papist !! Mr. Clayton only lived a few years after this interview, and Mr. Wesley does not appear to have again set foot in lovely Wensleydale until 1773. Neither did his preachers succeed in forming any interest in the dale, for some considerable time. There can be no doubt but that they early attempted this : but Mr. Ingham (who was also one of Mr. Wesley's early associates at Oxford) had formed sixty societies in Yorkshire, * called "Inghamite churches," and the regular tours of his assistants, extending through this Dale into Kendal, in Westmoreland, led to their frequently holding forth the word of life amongst the people. By the labours of these two distinct classes of preachers, a few individuals, about nine in number, were brought under a concern for salvation, and it became an important question to which of the two parties they should unite themselves. A difference of opinion prevailed, but they agreed to

* See Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, Page 248, Vol. 1st.

meet together to settle the question, and that by the opinion of the majority the whole should be governed. The meeting was held, and a majority of one decided in favor of Mr. Ingham. This determination however, did not totally shut out the labours of Mr. Wesley's preachers. A traditional anecdote has been handed down to this effect, that on one occasion, Jacob Rowell in the course of his travels had to pass through Redmire, but having learned something respecting the persecuting spirit of the people, had some hesitation of mind whether to attempt to preach there or not. As he came in sight of the place, that passage occurred to his recollection, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and he rode along through the village. He was recognized by two or three individuals, on whose mind a good work had commenced, they pursued after him, brought him back, and insisted upon having a sermon. Jacob stood up in the street, and took for his text, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." A gracious shower of divine influence descended, and the word did not return void, but accomplished that unto which it was sent. The spirit of persecution had exhibited itself here as in other places, yet sometimes the wrath of man was over-ruled to the glory of God. One man bent upon disturbing the people, when assembled for divine worship, ascended to the roof of the house, intending to perform some mischievous exploit during the

service. But whilst they were engaged in singing and prayer, his mind became seriously impressed, and conviction arrested him so powerfully, that he began to roar aloud for the distress of his soul, so that before the close of the service, it might be said of him, as of another persecutor of old, "Behold he prayeth!" This man was brought to the saving knowledge of the truth, and lived and died a witness of the power of grace.

Having thus taken a cursory view of the place, we are better prepared to accompany Mr Wesley on his second visit into this district. "Tuesday, June 14th, we crossed the enormous mountain into lovely Wensleydale, the largest by far of all the Dales, as well as the most beautiful. Some years since many had been awakened here, and joined together by Mr. Ingham and his preachers, but since the bitter dissension between their preachers, the poor sheep have all been scattered. A considerable number of these have been gleaned up, and joined together by our preachers. I came into the midst of them at Rebsire. As I rode through the town, the people stood staring on every side, as if we had been a company of monsters. I preached in the street, and they soon ran together, young and old, from every quarter. I reminded the elders of their having seen me thirty years before, when I preached in Wensley Church, and enforced once more, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." When I rode back through the

town, it wore a new face. The people were profoundly civil, they were bowing and curtsying on every side, such a change in two hours I have seldom seen."

Tradition says, that when first Mr. Wesley entered Redmire, the day being very fine, and it being about noon, he lay down upon the village green beneath the shade of a spreading tree, and resting his head upon his saddle bags, which he had placed for his pillow, he calmly slept for awhile.

Swaledale is not far distant from Wensleydale, and to a great extent runs parallel with it, only divided from it by the enormous mountain which Mr. Wesley mentions. It presents a striking contrast to Wensleydale; it has not its rich luxuriance of soil, nor the beauty of its scenery; its treasures are more within the bowels of the earth than on its surface, and the aspect of its rugged mountains is more calculated to inspire us with awe. Here Methodism had a much earlier establishment. It formed a part of Mr. Rowell's circuit, prior to 1760, and then numbered about forty members.

Blades was the first place in Swaledale where Methodism obtained a footing; it is situated on the declivity of a hill, about half a mile from the town of Reeth. Here a family of the name of Spensely at that time resided, who kindly opened their house at Blades for preaching, and hospitably entertained these servants of God. Some young men of the name of Spence from

Newbiggin in Teesdale, who acted as local preachers and exhorters, are acknowledged as the first honoured instruments of awakening the attention of the people to divine things. A society was soon formed at Blades, and another at Reeth. Here an Independent church had for some time existed, but its members looked upon the visits of the Methodists with at least an unfriendly if not an envious eye. It is well known that the first race of Methodist preachers were not furnished by colleges or academies; and hence they were regarded by those who had enjoyed these advantages, as illiterate men. In fact such assertions were unequivocally thrown out, and in the spirit of sarcasm that passage was applied to them, "Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown." This circumstance led one of the preachers to select these words for his text. This step excited much notice, turned the tide of public feeling against their assailants, and gave them no small annoyance. Methodism advanced despite of opposition, with a bold unbroken front, so that when Mr. Wesley visited Swaledale in 1768, he makes mention of the society, as one of the most lively which he had found in England; many of them rejoicing in the pure love of God, and many more earnestly seeking it. The number of members had by this time exceeded a hundred.

Swaledale at this early period was not without a representative in the ranks of itinerancy. Thomas Cherry a young man from Low Row, near Reeth,

burning with zeal for the salvation of souls, was called into the itinerant work in 1768, and sent to Scotland, where he laboured for two or three years, but his health suffering greatly, he was obliged to return home for a short period to recruit his strength. After a little time he went back and resumed his work, but the sword was too keen for the scabbard. When Mr. Wesley arrived at Dundee in 1772, he remarks in his journal, "May 7th, I took Thomas Cherry away with me, but it was too late, he will hardly recover. Let all observe (that no more preachers may murder themselves) here is another martyr to screaming." It was indeed too late, his work was done ;—he was brought home, but it was to rest in the sepulchre of his fathers.

At the conference of this year (1774), the societies in Swaledale and Wensleydale were detached from the Dales, and united to Thirsk circuit.

Mr. Wesley in the course of the journey so recently referred to, after preaching at Richmond on his way, arrived at Barnard Castle "Tuesd. y, June 14th. At six I preached at the end of our house in Barnard Castle. I was faint and feverish when I began ; but the staying an hour in a cold bath (for the wind was very high and sharp) quite refreshed me, so that all my faintness was gone and I was perfectly well when I concluded."

1774. At the ensuing conference the preachers were again changed, and Messrs. Joseph Thompson, Robert

Empringham and William Barker came into the round, Of the former of these brethren an opportunity will occur afterwards of furnishing some account. Mr. Empringham was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and continued faithful to the end. He laboured for twenty two years, and died in peace in 1792. Mr. Barker desisted in 1780.

1775. Mr. Thompson was re-appointed with Messrs. James Barry and David Evans. The last mentioned individual was of a trifling disposition, and laid himself open to heavy charges which were preferred against him, and occasioned his suspension. Mr. Barry was for many years a faithful labourer in his Lord's vineyard, and as he laboured much so he suffered much, but with unwearied patience. He died in great peace at Gainsborough in 1783.

1776. Mr. Wesley came again to Barnard Castle, on Thursday June 6th, but has entered no remarks of his visit in his Journals. On Friday, June 7th, he preached in Teesdale and Weardale, and states, "Here many rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and seemed determined never to rest till they had recovered that great salvation which they enjoyed some years ago."

A short time after this event, a correspondence took place between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Barry, which appears to have been occasioned by some reports which had reached the ears of the former, placing some of the local preachers in an unfavourable light.

As every thing from the pen of Mr. Wesley, is valuable, and as this letter has not reached the eye of the public, it is needless to offer any apology for transcribing it.

Whitby, June 24th, 1776.

DEAR JAMES,

The writer (I forget his name) does not say the local preachers talked blasphemy, but that several of them talk nonsense, and that some of them speak against perfection. This must not be suffered. Fix a regular plan for the local preachers, and see that they keep it. You cannot be too exact in this, and every other part of discipline. This however I expect. You will see the fruit of your labour. I am with love to sister Barry.

Your affectionate friend and brother,

J. WESLEY.

To Mr. James Barry,
at the preaching house,
in Barnard Castle.

CHAPTER X.

SKETCHES OF PREACHERS.

1776. At the conference of this year, Mr. John Crook (well known in the connexion as the apostle of the Isle of Man, from his long services and eminent usefulness there), with Mr. George Guthrie and Mr. William Lumley were appointed to the Dales. Mr. Guthrie was an Irishman of rather feeble intellectual capacity, and was soon obliged to desist from travelling. Mr. Lumley was a young man, just entering upon the itinerant work, full of holy fire and zeal, and promising fair to be of great use in the church. But very soon after his arrival, a letter came from Mr. Wesley, directing that he should proceed to Scotland, and exchange circuits with Mr. Robert Wilkinson, adding in his own laconic style ‘that upright man R. W. shall remain in the fire no longer among the Scots.’ At this period the appointments of the preachers were almost exclusively under the direction of Mr. Wesley. His sons in the gospel had entered into an engagement to labour where he pleased, and as he had his eye upon the whole field, he effected such interchanges as he

considered the necessity of the case required, and not unfrequently moved them from place to place, during the time intervening between the Conferences. This remark will explain the reason why, in some instances, the appointments as stated in this narrative, are not in accordance with the printed Minutes of Conferences. In this case Mr. Wesley's designs were frustrated ; as Mr. Lumley, before he had travelled once round the circuit, was, in the mysterious dispensations of Divine Providence, unexpectedly called home to receive his eternal reward. His death took place at Hexham, in the month of October. In the Minutes of the following Conference, he is characterized as "a blessed young man ; a happy witness of the full liberty of the children of God."

Some correspondence took place at this time, betwixt Mr. Wesley and the excellent Mr. Benson, who was then travelling in the Newcastle circuit, as to the best means of supplying the chasm made by the death of Mr. Lumley. He thus writes to Mr. Benson : "November 7. I wish Edward Jackson would go to the Dales. But here is a great difficulty. Robert Wilkinson you know is married, therefore he cannot live, though he may starve in Dundee circuit. I designed that brother Lumley and he should change places :—but what can be done now ?" Mr. Benson appears to have advised that Mr. Wilkinson should remain in Scotland, and that a young man should be sent to the

Dales, as Mr. Wesley writes again : " November 26, I really think you are right. It is better to help Robt. Wilkinson where he is, than to burden the Dales with an additional weight. But then what shall we do ? We have no supernumerary preachers—see if you can do anything with Edward Jackson." Mr. Jackson was then a schoolmaster at Collierly Dykes, in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, but Mr. Benson's negotiations with him at that time did not succeed : but John Blades (of whom some notice will afterwards appear) came to the circuit for a few months. However before the Lady-day Quarter, it appears from the circuit book, that Mr. Wilkinson had arrived at Barnard Castle.

Robert Wilkinson was a native of the circuit, and had been brought to the knowledge of the truth at Chapel in Weardale, where he resided and taught a school. In a short account of his life, contained in the *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 5th, written by himself, he depicts in glowing colours, the exquisite distress and deep anguish of soul through which he passed whilst seeking the pardoning love of God. At length the day of deliverance dawned : and whilst Joseph Wat on, a local preacher was conducting the service in the chapel in Weardale, he was enabled to believe in Christ, and found that peace which arises from reconciliation with God. After exercising his talents for awhile in his own neighbourhood, he was sent by Mr. Wesley to Carlisle ; it is said, on the recommendation of Mr.

Rowell, who had himself recently paid a visit to that city. He was taken under the wing of Mr. Bell, an exciseman, who received him into his house, furnished him with a horse, and principally supported him, the number in society not then exceeding ten or twelve. He soon had to partake of the bitter cup of persecution. Once he was seized by the collar whilst preaching, and dragged into the street. At another time at Scaleby Hill, a serious attack was commenced on him and his congregation, and he was struck with a stone on the side of his head, which caused the blood to flow profusely. No redress could be obtained for these injuries, for when the friends applied to a neighbouring magistrate, he set his dogs upon them, and drove them from the house. In the midst of these scenes of suffering, he received the following characteristic note from Mr. Wesley.

Leeds, August 5th, 1769.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I believe God calls you to labour in a quieter part of his vineyard, in the North of Ireland, in the Augher circuit, amongst a simple, loving, earnest people. Your best way is to carry your own horse over from Whitehaven, or rather Port-patrick, where you have a short and sure passage. Then ride on to the Widow Cumberland's in Lisburn, and any of our preachers whom you meet with, will

direct you to Charlemount or Augher. Be all in earnest.

I am, your affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

Mr. Wilkinson after travelling a few years in Ireland and Scotland with great acceptance, returned to England, and died at Grimsby in the year 1780, greatly lamented by the people. He stood high in the estimation of Mr. Wesley, who describes him in the minutes as "an Israelite indeed, a man of faith and prayer, who having been a pattern of all good works, died in the full triumph of faith."

1777. In the early part of this year, a small neat chapel was erected at Cotherstone, a village on the banks of the Tees, situated about four miles from Barnard Castle, a spot enriched with beautiful romantic scenery, and where a lovely society, forming three classes, it is said, at that time existed. The chapel was settled upon trustees, viz., William Hutchinson, Francis Emmerson, John Watson and Edward Simpson, of Cotherstone, John Hunter, of Hury, Job Benson, Thomas Dent, John Whitfield and Thomas Monkhouse, of Barnard Castle. The deed is dated May 10th, 1777, and witnessed by Mr. John Crook.

Mr. Wilkinson remained a second year in the circuit, along with Messrs. Jeremiah Robertshaw and Thomas Wride. Mr. Wride was an original both in the pulpit, and out of it. Though not destitute of preaching

qualifications, yet he indulged too much in quaintness and mimicry, the recollection of which is more vivid, than any special instances of usefulness. He had naturally a mechanical genius, which displayed itself in the regulation and repair of the clocks and watches, which he met with at the houses where he lodged; and he often astonished his friends in the Dales, by his ingenuity in suspending the fire-irons to his own time-piece, so as to make them fall at any given hour in the morning, at which they might wish to be awakened. This of course was on the same principle as an alarum clock, but at that time it excited no small amount of wonder.

1778. Mr. Robertshaw continued another year with Messrs. John Leech and Jonathan Brown for his colleagues. Mr. Leech "was a valuable man; distinguished by a zeal which no difficulties could extinguish, and a simplicity of manners and rectitude of conduct, which would have reflected no disgrace on the Christian church in its purest ages." He was again sent to Barnard Castle in 1801, and finished his course at Rochdale, January 12th, 1810, in the 74th year of his age. During the former period of his ministry in the Dales, he says, there were many remarkable conversions, and some happy deaths. Mr. Brown was a native of Weardale, and was this year commencing a ministry, in which he distinguished himself by great zeal, faithfulness and self-denial. He was converted to God in

the glorious revival referred to in Weardale. He travelled six years in Ireland, and thirty three in English circuits : in many of which he was eminently successful in bringing souls to God. He became a supernumerary in 1817, and departed in peace at Hull, August 2, 1825, aged 75.

The late excellent Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., paid a friendly visit to the societies in the town and Teesdale in the latter part of this year, and was employed almost daily in preaching the gospel of God at one place or another.

1779. We find Mr. Wesley again amongst his old friends in the Dales on May 10th. The previous day being the Sabbath, he had preached in the street at Darlington, and had been somewhat annoyed by a party of the Queen's dragoons. "Monday 10th, I preached at Barnard Castle, and saw a quite different behaviour in the Durham Militia, the handsomest body of soldiers I ever saw, except in Ireland. The next evening they all came, both officers and soldiers and were a pattern to the whole congregation." This is not the only time, the venerable man eulogizes the soldier-like appearance and exemplary conduct of this regiment. Such a testimony was not undeserved ; many of its officers at that time are said to have been men who feared God ; and the high commendation of Mr. Wesley was reciprocated by the men, who treated him in return with the most marked esteem and respect.

This is quite in character with John Wesley, he was a true patriot: George the Third, had not a more loyal subject in his dominions; every part of his deportment manifested that whilst his religion instructed him "to fear God," it taught him further "to honour the king." It was not improbably, to this occasion that a venerable pilgrim referred, when speaking in after years, of his reminiscences of this great man, he stated with heart felt emotions, how he had heard Mr. Wesley preach to the Durham militia, and that just before he gave out his text, he stroked his grey locks aside, and looking with his own peculiarly benignant and winning smile upon the congregation, exclaimed "now can I prevail upon some of you to enlist under my master, and become the soldiers of Christ?" The appeal arrested attention, and appeared to soften many hearts.

May 12, Wednesday, after preaching at Cotherstone and in Teesdale, Mr. Wesley says, "I went a little out of my way to see one of the wonders of nature. The Tees rushes down between two rocks, and falls sixty feet perpendicular into a basin of water sixty feet deep. In the evening I preached to the lovely congregation in Weardale." The High Force above referred to is a spectacle truly noble, and the scene august. The descent is greater than Mr. W. states, * being eighty two feet perpendicular into the basin, casting

* See Hutchinson's History of Durham.

forth a prodigious spray, stunning the ears with the hollow noise. To this spot of wild and beautiful scenery, tourists continue to resort up to the present time. Mr. Wesley had been in the habit of visiting its neighbourhood for upwards of twenty years, and was frequently within three or four miles of the place. How is it then that this was his first visit to it? Had he no relish for such sights? Undoubtedly he had the eye of the naturalist, could write volumes on Natural Philosophy—and admire “the wisdom of God in the works of creation,” but he laid all this under contribution, to the one work of his life; “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” In that business his labour was unparalleled; as we find from his journals that when in this quarter, he would preach at nine o’clock in the morning in Weardale, cross the Pike law where no carriage could travel, and where every now and then he was in danger of sticking in a quagmire, and be at Newbiggin at one:—taking his horse again, and crossing another chain of moors and mountains, would preach in Swaledale at seven in the evening; an amount of labour at the sight of which many men not deficient in energy would shrink.

This year, Mr. Rowell was for the last time appointed Mr. Wesley’s assistant here, having Robt. Wilkinson and Thos. Readshaw for his helpers. The latter individual had been called out from the Hexham part of the circuit, but after being employed awhile, without

any particular acceptability, ultimately returned to his own neighbourhood.

After the Christmas quarter, Mr. Joseph Thompson was sent to supply the room of Mr. Readshaw, who was removed elsewhere. We find Mr. Wesley again in this district in the following year, "1780, Wednesday, May 3rd, Judging it impracticable to pass the mountains in a carriage, I sent my chaise round, and took horse. At twelve I preached at Swaledale to a loving people, increasing both in grace and number. Thence we crossed over another range of dreary mountains, and in the evening reached Barnard Castle. Not being yet inured to riding, I now felt something like weariness; but I forgot it in the lively congregation, and in the morning it was gone." That sermon from the enquiry of the young ruler, "What lack I yet?" was long remembered. The following day he preached at Cotherstone and Newbiggin, and arriving in Weardale, he "found the people as usual, some of the liveliest in the kingdom, knowing and desiring to know nothing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The preachers appointed at the next Conference were Messrs. Edward Jackson, John Morgan and William Saunders. Mr. Jackson was a superior man, highly respectable in pulpit talent, mild and amiable in his disposition. He had been an acceptable local preacher, as previously mentioned at Colliery Dykes, near Newcastle, and was called out in 1777. He laboured

faithfully in various circuits for near thirty years, when he was rather suddenly called to his eternal reward. He died May 8th, 1806, at Burslem. His name was "as ointment poured forth," and the savour long remained with his friends in the Dales, by whom he was highly appreciated as a man and a preacher. 1782. The following year Mr. Morgan remained along with Messrs William Thom and Jasper Robinson. The superintendent Mr. Thom, was a man of respectable ministerial talents, and generally acceptable among the people. He afterwards seceded from the Connexion in the rupture that took place on the expulsion of Alexander Kilham. Mr. Morgan was called from his scene of labour to the heavenly rest, June 17th, 1782. He was a man of sound judgment in the things of God, and a good preacher. His end was that of holy triumph, exhibiting a striking display of the power of divine grace. His excellent colleague, Mr. Robinson, who furnished an account of his death for the Magazine, * informs us that when he went to visit his dying brother, his first words upon seeing him, were "my heart is filled with joy and happiness at seeing you."—"I hope" replied Mr. R. "it is owing to the love of God in your heart." He answered, "I have been searching my heart, for pride, anger, and other vile tempers, but blessed be God, I find none ! Where are they ? They are gone. 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished

* See Arminian Magazine, vol. 6, page 130.

my course, I have kept the faith.' You will preach my funeral sermon ; but preach up Jesus Christ and not me. And when I am dead, write to Mr. Wesley, and tell him, I have had a long fight all this winter. From the beginning thereof I have had thoughts that something was coming upon me, that I was for another world ; and I have been endeavouring to preach Jesus, as much as possible. I love Jesus. I want to be with him. I want my whole soul united to him. It shall be so—it will be so—it must be so." On the morning of the 17th, in the agonies of death, he said " If I dared to complain, I might say, this is hell—If Jesus' blood was not shed for me I am damned." Mr. Robinson replied, "but it was shed for you ; therefore you are saved." Then said he "Lord Jesus come quickly ! I shall be with thee this day in Paradise ! I shall drink wine in my Father's kingdom ! Pray ! The prayer of faith availeth much." Mr. R. prayed that the Lord would give him a happy dismissal from the body, and a glorious reception into the Paradise of God. He then turned on his side and quietly rested in Jesus. His remains were interred in Barnard Castle churchyard, and Mr. Robinson agreeably to his dying request, preached his funeral sermon, from 2 Tim. 4 chap. 7 & 8 v. "I have fought a good fight &c." Thus died John Morgan, who is graphically described by Mr. Wesley as "a plain rough man, who after various trials, and a long painful illness, joyfully

committed his soul, his wife, and eight little children, to his merciful and faithful Creator."

On the 20th and 21st June, 1782, a second conveyance of the chapel property was executed, from Agar Crampton and Hugh Railton, who had survived John Williams, and also from Joshua Hammond, John Whitfield, Simeon Holroyd, Richard Steele and Jona Ridsdale, who had on the 31st May, 1779, bought more land for a preacher's dwelling house, on the one part, to John Whitfield, Richard Steele, Jonathan Ridsdale, Thomas Monkhouse, Anthony Wetherell, Anthony Steele, Arthur Carrick, Joshua Hammond and John Caygill, as trustees of the entire property.

In the following year, an addition to the gallery in the meeting house was made by the erection of the west wing. The congregations having been on the increase, the trustees calculated that if additional seats were provided, they would be speedily occupied, and that the money arising from the rents, would more than repay the interest of the sum required for its construction. The experiment succeeded, and in a few years the whole expence was liquidated. The west wing was occupied by the men, and the front by the females, according to Mr. Wesley's directions, that in all chapels they should sit apart. A second addition of a similar character afterwards became necessary, and was completed in like manner.

CHAPTER XI.

CHARACTER AND DEATH OF MR. ROWELL.

1782. After long exposure to the pelting storm of persecution, we may apply to the rising church in this place, the language of the evangelist, "Then had the churches rest,—and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." The earliest adherents to the cause of truth, were successively escaping away to the land of cloudless sunshine, and it is certainly to be regretted that so many of their names were suffered to be written in the dust, and that now, the most diligent research of the historian can only recover very scanty materials respecting them. This remark applies particularly to the case of one of the earliest members, Joshua Hammond. For many years he had been a devoted servant of God, a useful class-leader, and an efficient labourer in nearly every department of Methodism. His days were prolonged to serve the cause of God to an extended period, and after having been a pillar in the church on earth, he was this year called to his eternal home,

“To the house of his Father above,
The palace of angels and God.”

1783. The preachers appointed to the Dales circuit at the Conference of this year, were Messrs. John Peacock, Matthew Lumb and John King. With the two latter it was the commencement of a long itinerant career. Mr. King in a letter to his father, dated September 8th, says, “I arrived safe here after a very pleasant journey. The society is composed of a plain and a loving people, who have provided a convenient house for the preachers. The number in society is about one hundred. I attended the five o’clock meeting this morning, which was the most comfortable season I have known for some time.” A tolerable idea may be formed of the extent of the circuit, from another letter of Mr. King’s, bearing date the 2nd April, 1784, in which he remarks, “Yesterday I finished my second round in this circuit.”

Mr. Lumb referring to the commencement of his labours here, says, that he found Mr. Peacock a very kind assistant indeed. But he adds, “I had not been many hours in Barnard Castle, before my soul was overwhelmed with the thoughts of what I was entering upon, so that I could neither preach nor pray, for the first four hours. Mr. Peacock encouraged me much, and at length with a heavy heart I felt a desire to do as well as I could. The circuit was very long, and we had very wet weather, so that I was wet to the

skin every day for three weeks. This with the dreary mountains over which I had to pass, served to bring my dear friends and comfortable home to my remembrance, so that I was much tried in my mind, but on the second Sabbath morning as I was preaching at Weardale, I had such a view of Christ's love to his disciples, and to the world in general, that my heart was melted within me, and I burst into a flood of tears, till I wept my sorrow into joy, and my heaviness into gladness. That winter was very hard, so that it was at many times impossible to cross the mountains with a horse; therefore at three different times I walked in my boots and great coat, about one hundred and fifty miles, yet did not catch cold. Thrice I was very near being lost in the snow on the mountains. I crept over the drifts on my hands, whilst the snow fell so fast that I could not see many yards before me, and I was out of the road and had no one to guide me. At the conclusion of the year I was happy and thankful, when I reflected on the goodness of God in casting my lot amongst such a people, who not only bore with my weakness, but encouraged me to go forward in the good way."

A Mr. John Mills from Ireland also preached in the circuit at this time. He had been labouring in Ireland, and Mr. Wesley designing to employ him in the work at home, sent him to the Dales till conference. But the preachers who were acquainted with him, having no confidence in his stability, he was then rejected.

About the close of this year (1783), that noble veteran in Immanuel's army, Jacob Rowell, died at Barnard Castle. He was indeed, as Mr. Wesley describes him, "a faithful old soldier, fairly worn out in his master's service." He was born at Low Mill, Allendale, in 1722, and appears to have been brought up to agricultural pursuits; and like to the prophet Elisha, was following the plough when he was made the subject of regenerating grace, by which his way was prepared for being employed in the noble work of cultivating the vineyard of the Lord. He was awakened in the twenty-sixth year of his age, under the heart-searching ministry of Christopher Hopper, who had entered the Dale with the light of divine truth, enforcing repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. It is said that Jacob was either going to or returning from a cockfight, when he espied a crowd surrounding the apostolic man who was delivering his message in the open air. Attracted by the unusual sight, he drew near to the skirts of the congregation, and standing with his bag thrown over his shoulder, an arrow of conviction pierced his heart. This was the turning point in his life,—the first apparently inconsiderable link in that chain of providential interposition which led him to the enjoyment of saving faith in Christ, and to a life of extensive usefulness in the world. No sooner was the holy fire of divine love kindled within, than he

manifested an ardent desire to promote the conversion of his fellowmen ; so that in the end of the year 1748, he began to exhort his neighbours in Allendale and Cornwood to “flee from the wrath to come.” To his labours in Weardale, in 1749, we have previously referred, actively indeed were the feet of this gospel messenger employed, in traversing that long chain of mountains which intersects Allendale, Weardale and Teesdale. 1750, he preached in Cockermouth and its neighbourhood, and towards the end of 1751, a still larger sphere of useful labour was opened to him, by Mr. Wesley giving him an appointment to Ireland, where he continued about two years. He was present at the first Irish conference that was held in Limerick, in 1752. After his return to England, he attended the first conference that was held in Leeds, in May 1753, when he was station'd to the Newcastle Circuit. In 1754 he travelled in Cornwall, in 1755 in Leeds, and in 1756 in Newcastle again. In 1757 as we have already noticed, he was intrusted with the formation of the Dales Circuit. But it is not necessary to trace Mr. Rowell through his succeeding appointments in Sheffield, Staffordshire, Yarm, Thirsk, Whitehaven and the Dales Circuits. In every place he was the same, he shunned no cross, he declined no labour, the salvation of souls was his leading object ; and he was accustomed to say, that he should consider he had renounced his religion, if he should save money by preaching the

gospel. His ministerial character was unsullied, and his personal piety unquestionable. He was mighty in prayer ; like his namesake the patriarch, he was no stranger to wrestling with God. The following significant record appears in his memorandum book. "January 22nd, 1766. After a long fast, God was pleased to manifest himself to my soul ; at which time I am fully persuaded, that all my imprudences from my first acquaintance with God are freely and fully forgiven. Hallelujah ! Written at Robin Hood's Bay." A similar record is repeated, February 28th, 1771, written at Melmerby, in Cumberland.

Mr. Rowell was a man of refined and sympathetic feeling, and though he was a son of thunder to the impenitent, yet such was his pity for the souls of perishing men, that whilst engaged in the pulpit, the perspiration and tears were often seen trickling down his face in mingled streams, so that by some he was termed the "Weeping Prophet."

His preaching was energetic and awakening. In the Dales, such were the demonstrations of the power of God which accompanied the ministry, that he received a somewhat singular cognomen, though perfectly innocent on the part of those who applied it ; according to the dialect of the country it was "fell'em in th' heck ;" intended to signify, that such was the power of his ministry, that persons who could only reach the heck, or door porch, were felled or struck

down by the word. Many were the seals to his ministry ; and they will doubtless form the crown of his rejoicing.

At one Conference at which he was present, Mr. Wesley desired him to preach, a work from which his diffidence led him to wish to be excused. Mr. Wesley was importunate, and he was prevailed upon one morning to address the people, which he did with such energy and power, as constrained the venerable founder of Methodism afterwards to exclaim "what have I been doing ? What has my brother Charles been doing ? This man will save more souls than any of us." He continued his itinerant labours until he was no longer able to mount his horse, but so anxious were the people to enjoy a continuance of his services, that a small easy carriage was procured, in which he was conveyed to his appointments.

About the year 1779, growing infirmities compelled the "faithful old soldier" to retire from the field and to sheathe his sword. The hand that had wielded it, now forgot its cunning. An attack of paralysis enervated his frame ; the voice once so powerful, and on the sound of which multitudes had hung amid breathless attention, lost its power ; and he was often the subject of great mental depression. About the close of 1783, his discharge was signed, and he entered into rest. His flesh rests in hope, in Barnard Castle churchyard, by the side of his two wives, and five of his children,

waiting the resurrection morn. His old friend Mr. Joseph Thompson preached his funeral sermon. An attempt to pourtray his character, in verse, was made by an humble individual of the name of Robert Spencer, residing in Barnard Castle, and though the production may not possess much poetic merit, yet as it may serve to convey some outline of the man, we shall give it insertion.

“Haste happy spirit, to the realms of light,
The victor’s crowned, won is the glorious fight,
The hardy veteran’s gone, the mortal struggle’s o’er,
And toil and pain can now afflict no more.
Your Prophet’s gone, justly may you bewail
Your loss, ye scattered hamlets of the dale ;
Oft have ye heard him preach, and seen him shed
The tear of pity, o’er the guilty head,
The conscience wounded, then the balm applied,
‘Behold the Lamb of God,’ the herald cries,
Extracting the rich balm from numerous springs
Of sacred shade, that veil those precious things,
It was not ease, nor honour called him forth,
To preach the gospel to the barbarous north.
An hospitable cottage, scarce could find,
To entertain the lover of mankind.
Firm and unshaken, nobly did he stand
The envenomed tongue, and persecuting hand.
Embracing all the lost of human kind,
His prayer how fervent, and how unconfined.
He agonizing, sweat from every pore,
And long’d to see religion deluge o’er
The wide extended world, from pole to pole,
So universal, his capacious soul,

And he did see the powers of hell give way,
 The scatt'ring shades presag'd a glorious day.
 He saw conviction seize the giddy throng,
 And catch the gospel blessings from his tongue,
 He saw success the powerful word attend,
 And thousands flocking to the sinner's friend,
 At length, the pressure of his labour sinks ;
 Exhausted nature's nervous system shrinks,
 Yet he reluctant, quits the well fought field,
 Till faltering nature, him compell'd to yield,
 The tongue so used to glorify his God
 Its trembling accents now not understood ;
 The hands stretch'd out, the needy to supply
 Their office now forget, and dormant lie,
 The active feet shall carry him no more
 To tread the courts of Him he did adore ;
 By palsy struck, long did his mortal frame,
 Bear little of the living but the name,
 Then did he sink in death by slow decay,
 While resignation gently sloped the way.
 And is the Christian gone ! (oh glorious end) !
 The tender husband, parent, steady friend,
 Who taught us how to bear affliction's rod,
 His life and death point out the way of God.
 Earth keep thy sacred trust, until the day
 Th' Archangel's trump reanimates his clay,
 Then shall he rise, all glorious and divine,
 And like the radiant orbs, for ever shine."

Mr. Rowell's widow survived him nearly five years, and died in the full triumph of faith, November, 12th, 1788, aged 59.

1784. We find Mr. Wesley here again, at the usual time of his visits to the North. He says " Wednesday,

June 9th, I went to Barnard Castle. Here I was informed, my old friend Mr. Fielding and his wife were gone to rest. His son not choosing to live there, had let his lovely house to a stranger : so in a little time, his very name and memorial will be lost." It became necessary therefore that another house should be provided for the venerable man, and on this occasion he was entertained at the house of the writer's father Mr. Anthony Steele, who then resided in the centre of the Market Place. He preached in the evening, from Revelation 3, 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock &c., on the following morning accompanied by the preachers he set out for Weardale. He preached at Cotherstone, where he says "I had the pleasure of seeing some of our brethren who had been long at variance cordially reconciled. Hence, we rode through wind and rain to Newbiggin in Teesdale." After preaching there, he rode over the mountains into Weardale. Mr. Lumb could not but remark the cheerfulness of Mr. Wesley, who though so far advanced in years, exhibited the sprightliness of youth, particularly as they crossed Pike-low between Teesdale and Weardale.

Adverting to former days when travelling over the same tract, he amused his companions no little, by the relation of a rather ludicrous occurrence, which took place on one of his journeys. Some of the company were expressing some hesitation to one another, whether they were in the right path or not; the guide who was

lingering in the rear, over-hearing them, sprang forward in full confidence of his ability to lead them right, exclaiming ‘ follow me, I will show you the road ’—but luckless boast ! The next moment he was floundering in the midst of a large bog, from whence neither himself nor his horse could be extricated without difficulty, whilst the novelty of his position, afforded no small amusement to the party, who were little disposed to follow their leader. Arriving in Weardale he found not his old host : “ good Stephen Watson was removed to Abraham’s bosom, so was that mother in Israel, Jane Natrass (formerly Salkeld) the great instrument of that amazing work amongst children. But God is with them still : most of the leaders, and many of the people are much alive to God, as we found in the evening, when we had such a shower of grace, as I had seldom known.”

“ Friday 11th, About ten, riding through a village called Middleton, I was desired to preach there, so I began in the street without. A large number of people came together, and received the word with gladness. Afterwards we rode at leisure to Barnard Castle.” It appears that at this time the regular preaching had been withdrawn from Middleton. It had become a barren wilderness, and Mr. Wesley’s renewed attempt to awaken the attention of the people to divine things, was not immediately followed up by his preachers. For about five years after this, the place was without

the preaching of the gospel, until the removal of a Methodist family thither in 1789, on their arrival they opened their doors to receive the preachers, to the great joy of many who thronged the house exceedingly, eagerly hungering for the bread of life. One of the members of this family was Hannah Stagg, who afterwards married Mr. Anthony Steele before mentioned. Whilst she resided in Middleton, she was a nursing mother to the infant society there, and soon had cause of rejoicing in beholding the sun of prosperity arising again upon the place.

It may not be uninteresting to record the death of two of the first members of society in Barnard Castle, Joshua and Grace Addison, who about this period "found their long sought rest." The latter was the Grace Dunn previously referred to, and formerly the wife of Francis Dunn, the man who took such an active part in the prosecution of Temple at the Durham Assizes. Grace, through the preaching of the Methodists, very early became concerned about her eternal interests, and was resolved to abide by the truth. Her husband (Francis) was not at first satisfied in his mind, with the countenance which his wife gave to these new doctrines as they were then considered, and this led her to make it the burthen of her prayers to God, that his mind might be enlightened and convinced of the truth. The desire of her heart was granted, in his being graciously wrought upon, through a dream

or vision of the night, which led him to say to her, 'now Grace I am persuaded the Methodist preachers are the servants of God, and I will never oppose them more.' He yielded to the power of saving grace, and became a decided follower of Christ. After his death his widow married Joshua Addison, who was long a class leader, and for a series of years they walked together in the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, and in their deaths they were not long divided, for within six weeks of each other, they were added to the general assembly and church of the first born.

At the Conference of this year, the minutes record the names of Thomas Ellis, John Ogilvie and John McCadden as the preachers for the Dales. The last named individual was not more than a few weeks on the Circuit, before he was discovered to be quite unfit for the ministry on account of immorality, and he decamped in disgrace. In the month of October Mr. Jonathan Crowther arrived as his successor, a man well known in the connexion and who shared its highest honours. This was with him the commencement of a protracted career of usefulness.

1785. Mr. Ellis was reappointed to the circuit along with Messrs. George Mowatt and Edward Burbeck. Mr. Ellis in the course of about three years after this time, retired from the work and located at Hexham, where he ended his days. Mr. Mowatt travelled long

in the connexion, and died at Bristol, to which place he had removed as a supernumerary. This was Mr. Burbeck's last appointment in England. After labouring for one year in the circuit, he was sent to Scotland, where his labours were very soon terminated. A singular occurrence bordering somewhat on the marvellous connected with his death, and that of his colleague Joshua Keighley, is related by Mr. Atmore in the *Methodist Memorial*, who says that the account may be depended upon as true, being attested by several persons of respectability and veracity.

“Mr. Keighley and Mr. Burbeck being both appointed for Inverness, met at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and proceeded from thence by sea to Aberdeen. After spending a few days with the people there, they went on their way to Inverness. As they were travelling on foot between Huntley and Keith, a man terrible in appearance stood before them, having a large club in his hand, with an angry countenance he drove them before him, repeatedly declaring they should never return back, beyond that place where they stood! They were both much frightened and related the circumstance to several of their friends. Little notice however was taken of it, till after it pleased God to take them both away. How to account for this I know not ; but it is singular that Mr. Keighley and Mr. Burbeck were both on their way back to England, were both taken ill of the same fever, and both died within a few miles of the place

where the man met them, and that neither of them were permitted to return south again as far as that place." Mr. Burbeck was a pious, sincere, upright minister of the gospel, eminently devoted to God, and zealous in promoting the best of causes. Mr. Wesley says, he was qualified for eminent service in his Lord's vineyard, but was taken just in the dawn of his usefulness.

1786. Mr. Wesley paid his next visit to Barnard Castle, of which we have record, on May 11th and was entertained at the house of Mr. Thomas Monkhouse. No remarks are published in his journal except that he found much life in the congregation. A living member of the family of his host has a lively recollection of the venerated man placing his hand upon his head, and enquiring his name; a circumstance quite in unison with Mr. Wesley's remarkable love to children, manifested in his laying his hands upon them, and blessing them in the name of the Lord.

Mr. Wesley's last journey to Barnard Castle took place June 9th, 1788. In his published journal, the name Barnard Castle is omitted, where it ought to have been inserted. He says "Monday, June 9th, I preached at Durham about eleven, to more than the house could contain. Even in this polite and elegant city, we now want a larger chapel. In the evening, I preached near our preaching house [?] to a large multitude, I think as numerous as that at Gateshead fell. Many of the Durham Militia, with several of their officers,

were there, and all of them seemed to receive the word not as the word of man, but as indeed the word of God." Mr. Wesley has omitted to say where he preached in the evening. Unquestionably, not at Durham, but at Barnard Castle. The society book bears evidence of the payment of his expenses—Barnard Castle, not Durham, was the head quarters of the militia, and the recollections of the most aged of the friends harmonize with this explanation.

CHAPTER XII.

STRANGE DELUSIONS.

1787. We have now recorded the origin, and traced the progress of the work of God in this town and neighbourhood, during the first forty years of its existence, and have found it surviving the casualties of infancy, growing and gathering strength, till it arrived at such a degree of stability as to defeat the expectations of its enemies, who calculated upon its extinction, and would doubtless have rejoiced to have rung its funeral knell ; whilst the hopes of its friends were cheered with the prospect of its increasing vigour and permanency. In the further progress of this narrative, it will not be practicable to find such an amount of interesting incidents as to justify us in attempting to detail the events of each succeeding year ; we shall therefore confine our attention to the most remarkable occurrences, keeping in view the order of time in which they took place.

At the Conference of this year, Messrs. James Thom, John Sanderson, and John Stamp were appointed to the Dales. Mr. John Sanderson was a native of

the Weardale side of the Circuit, and though destitute of the advantages of education, by diligence and close application, he so cultivated his mind as to become a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, a faithful, zealous, and useful minister. He died at Dundee, September, 1802.

Mr. Stamp was afterwards well known in the connexion, and rose to considerable eminence.

We are now entering upon an era distinguished by strange delusions, which occasioned no inconsiderable excitement in the society at Barnard Castle, as well as in several other places in the north of England. In detailing these, it will be necessary to commence with a notice of John Blades, whose name was introduced on a former page. He was a native of Northumberland, and had been employed in the itinerant work, but after contending for about two years with its hardships, and finding himself unable to cope with them, he desisted from travelling, and acted in the capacity of a local preacher in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, and in some parts of the Dales Circuit. He is represented by those who knew him, as a weak man, both physically and mentally. He soon began to entertain singular views of the doctrine of justifying faith, disconnecting the act from divine influence, and placing it in the power of the individual, to be exercised at any time. He further insinuated, that Mr. Wesley had not clear views of the fullness of that salvation,

which belonged to Christian believers, but that it was their privilege to enjoy not only sanctification, but glorification on earth. About the year 1784, he separated from the Methodists, because he considered himself fettered, in not being at liberty to publish so fully as he desired all that salvation which he professed to believe. Having thus asserted his independence and erected his standard, he proceeded to beat up for recruits; a mighty sensation was at first produced; the novelty of his doctrines attracted the unstable; and very soon he was enabled to form a regular chain of societies, stretching along the east coast from Newcastle to Whitby, and called after his own name Bladites. For a while everything appeared to move on triumphantly; a few local preachers, being unwilling to be subject to rule, left us and preached amongst his congregations. Some of the principal of these were George Wilson, Thomas Teasdale, Thomas Dawson, and John Burton. Amongst those who embraced his tenets were Ralph Hodgson a miller, who resided at West Auckland, and his wife, both of whom were members of the Methodist Society. With these parties there lived as servant maid a young woman, about fifteen or sixteen years of age, of the name of Margaret Barlow, a native of Darlington. This young girl became the subject of peculiar excitement, professing to hold intercourse with an angel, who, she said, revealed to her several important events that should come

to pass. She was particularly encouraged to make known these revelations by John Blades, and some of his preachers, who themselves cordially believing her statements, hesitated not to publish them abroad; indeed it was a frequent practice with Blades himself, to introduce the subject to his congregations, at the close of his sermons. Amongst other things, she foretold that the death of Mr. Wesley would take place that year, but the event proved that in this instance as well as in others, she was a lying prophetess. But the principal theme of her revelations, was the glorious coming of Christ, to extirpate the wicked, and reign with his saints upon earth. Perhaps we cannot give a more correct elucidation of the nature of the enthusiastic frenzy of these deluded individuals, than by the insertion of a verbatim copy of a letter addressed by Ralph Hodgson to Mr. Richard Steele of Wolsingham, and endorsed "with all possible speed;" premising that it presents us with a humiliating specimen of delusion, and a lively illustration of that mass of ignorance, with which Methodism had to conflict in its early history.

West Auckland, May 17th, 1788.

My dear Brother,

I embrace the first opportunity to inform you of the most dreadful calamity, which the Lord is about to bring upon the wicked upon the face of the whole earth. I have been most assuredly convinced

that the Lord hath despatched an angel to make this known, I having both seen, and heard, and felt her to be an angel ; so as I am as fully convinced she is no other than an angel, as that I exist : and as an angel cannot err, we should receive the message as from the Lord. And this is declared by the angel, that the Lord is about shortly to destroy the wicked from the face of the earth, both root and branch, as fire doth stubble, and that time I know to be at hand, which alarms me much. I am using all the means in my power, to spread the account all over the whole world. O that I could prevail upon you to lend an helping hand, so as to spread it far and near, the time being so short before the wicked will be destroyed off the face of the earth ! This I believe as fully as though I saw it accomplished with my eyes already. This the angel hath affirmed ; also that without perfect holiness, no one can or will see the Lord to their comfort. O how should your people be urged to holiness of heart ! spare no pains or labour that this may be accomplished. The angel declared also that children from seven years old are answerable for their conduct, and in consequence liable to be cut off and damned on account of sin. Also a proof of the Lord being grieved with them who have been justified, and neglected to go on to be sanctified, the Lord made it known by the angel, that if my wife did not go on to be sanctified (although she was sensible that she was then in a state

of justification,) the Lord would only continue his spirit to her, a fortnight. You may judge how we were alarmed, and the more especially from the angel's making it known of so many people from whom the Lord has withdrawn his spirit. But thanks to God ! By struggling and taking the kingdom as by violence, she entered that blessed liberty of perfect love, which casteth out fear that is slavish. O my dear brother ! if you should not be convinced so as to believe the report, come and see if these things are not so. Thomas Teasdale will preach on Sunday week, at one o'clock, and after that a lovefeast, &c. But O brother, believe that my motive is purely, that sinners may be alarmed and souls saved. Reject not this because it comes from so weak and unworthy a creature as me. The Lord chooses (at times) the foolish things of this world to confound the wisdom of the wise, and must now conclude, in haste, with much prayer,

Your very affectionate brother,

RALPH HODGSON.

P. S.—I enclose here a letter, if you get it to John Pybus, will be obliged to you. That time is about to commence when all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. O brother ! from my acquaintance with you, I must charge you to believe this, and publish it accordingly with all your might, and I will answer for the consequences."

During the midst of this excitement, Mr. Wesley in his visits to the northern Societies came into the neigh-

bourhood, and a powerful attempt appears to have been made, to gain over his influence in sanction of this strange delusion. For this purpose, Mr. Hodgson waited upon him at Newcastle, being probably very desirous to gain the ear of the venerable man, before he had the opportunity of learning any particulars from other quarters. From the account printed in the first edition of his journal, as well as from traditionary testimony, Mr. W. evinced too great credulity, and gave more countenance to the affair, than could have been wished, by those who were concerned for the credit of religion; this is however the less surprising to those who have observed his propensity to attach some importance to accounts of a similar character, and it ought also to be remembered that he was then in the eighty fifth year of his age. He states as follows. Tuesday, 10th (June). "We went through one of the pleasantest countries I ever saw, to Darlington. Before I left Newcastle, I was desired to read a strange account of a young woman late of Darlington. But I told the person who brought it, I can form no judgment till I talk with Margaret Barlow herself. This morning she came to me, and again in the afternoon, and I asked her abundance of questions. I was soon convinced that she was not only sincere, but deep in grace, and therefore incapable of deceit. I was convinced likewise, that she had frequent intercourse with a spirit, that appeared in the form of an angel.

I know not how to judge of the rest. Her account was, 'for above a year, I have seen this angel, whose face is exceedingly beautiful, her raiment (so she speaks) white as snow, and glistening like silver, her voice unspeakably soft and musical. She tells me many things before they come to pass. She foretold, I should be ill at such a time, in such a manner, and well at such an hour, and it was so exactly. She has said, such a person shall die at such a time, and he did so. Above two months ago she told me, your brother was dead, (I did not know you had a brother,) and that he was in heaven. And some time since she told me, you will die in less than a year. But what she has most frequently and earnestly told me is, that God will in a short time be avenged of obstinate sinners, and will destroy them with fire from heaven.' Whether this will be so or not, I cannot tell, but when we were alone there was a wonderful power in her words, and as the Indian said to David Brainard, 'they did good to my heart.' It is above a year since this girl was first visited in this manner, being then between fourteen and fifteen years old. But she was then quite a womanish girl, and of unblameable behaviour. Suppose that which appeared to her really was an angel, yet from the face, the voice, and the apparel, she might easily mistake him for a female; and this mistake is of little consequence.

"Much good hath already resulted from this odd event and is likely to ensue, provided those who believe, and

those who disbelieve her report, have but patience with each other."

It is very clear from this extract, that a diversity of opinion existed amongst the people respecting the revelations of this deluded individual. Some had sufficient discernment to reject her testimony in toto, others professed to give full credence to every part of it; whilst probably a third class were hovering in the scale of indecision, and were unable to form an opinion. It is quite natural to suppose that the coming of Mr. Wesley, would be hailed by all parties, and a strong anxiety felt to learn his opinion; and it is to be regretted, that after weighing his sentiments as recorded above, the balance should appear to preponderate so much in favor of the impostor. The interview described, took place in a room in the house of Mr. Thomas Pickering; Margaret was accompanied by Mr. Hodgson her master, and during the time, various attempts were made to counterfeit supernatural noises.

Traditionary reports harmonize with the above record. A son of Mr. Stephen Potter, an esteemed local preacher, informed the writer, that after the parties had retired, his father entered the room, and confidentially enquired of Mr. Wesley, what he thought of the extraordinary affair, when he laconically replied "I don't think she is a deceiver, she may be deceived." On the same evening, the writer's father in company

with other Barnard Castle friends, were invited to sup with Mr. Wesley at Mr. Pickering's, and they could not but notice that he did not manifest his usual cheerfulness ; the prediction that he should die in the course of the year, connected with the reference to the recent death of his brother Charles, appeared to have produced a powerful impression on his mind, and turned the subject of his conversation to his own approaching dissolution ; when amongst other remarks he gave emphatic utterance to the directions which are contained in his will, that there might be "no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp," but that six plain men might carry his body to the grave.

But to return to Margaret Barlow. This painful imposture having received no check from Mr. Wesley, but having apparently received his countenance, became a subject of great notoriety. The pulpits of each party were too often made the arena for the expression of opinion, and the people were in the habit of watching the statements of the preacher, to catch some idea of his sentiments. The preachers connected with John Blades, generally trumpeted forth its fame without reserve, yet some acted with more prudential caution. On one occasion when Mr. Potter was about to preach at Charter's Haugh, the cry was, 'now we shall hear what Stephen has got to say about the angel,' when he opened his bible, and deliberately gave out his text "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any

other gospel, unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Margaret however nothing daunted, now proceeded to greater lengths of daring ; pretending to be under the influence of invisible agency, she was in the habit of inviting her dupes to accompany her into a neighbouring wood, called Brusselton Folly, where their proceedings were conducted with greater impropriety than it is proper to detail. Waxing bolder and bolder, she was at length led to fix the precise day, when the long expected desolations should take place, and many received the prediction with implicit confidence. Some in expectation of a reward in heaven, sold their clothes, and distributed the proceeds amongst the poor ; whilst others disposed of their real property, and some professors of religion of weak and credulous minds, were anticipating with delight, the division amongst themselves of the possessions of the opulent, and rejoicing in the prospect of reigning gloriously with Christ upon earth.

The day so anxiously looked for, arrived at last ; numbers had sat up the whole of the previous night, in anxious expectation :—they looked out for it, as they who looked out for the morning. The morning dawned ; but it was not, without clouds :—some portentous signs made their appearance :—the heavens gathered blackness—the vivid lightning flashed,—the roll of the dread thunder followed,—husbands hastened home to die by

the side of their wives, the children were not forgot, but were diligently sought up, and safely lodged within doors, lest they should be swept away in the overflowing destruction ; whilst others, frantic with joy, their faith waxing stronger and stronger, waving their hats in triumph, exclaimed aloud, ' Now its coming : Now its coming ! ' The business of the market suffered a partial interruption, as there would naturally be little disposition to lay in provision for the future, when so much uncertainty seemed to hang on the morrow. Bye and bye, the clouds dispersed, the heavens brightened, and as the quicksilver in the barometer ascended, the excited feelings of the dupes of imposition fell lower and lower, till the day passed over, and all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. The Bladite societies were speedily shattered in pieces, for now the bubble was burst : the scene which had been so long in a process of preparation, came off a complete farce ; but the principal actors were hooted off the stage. Neither John Blades, Ralph Hodgson, nor Margaret Barlow, could again lift their diminished heads before a British public, but fled across the great Atlantic, to take refuge in the wilds of America. But we have no evidence to produce, that either the painful lessons taught them by bitter experience, or change of country, or clime, produced any ameliorating effect, on their principles or conduct. The only information we can supply on this point, is

an extract from a letter written by John Blades to a friend in Darlington. It is dated from

Albany, December 16th, 1807.

“ You may inform Mr. and Mrs. Brown, there is a people called Shakers, only nine miles from this city : they live principally together in a few families. They do not marry ; the men and wives that join, exclaim loudly against marriage, as the greatest sin in the world, and their men and women live apart : children are also taken from their parents, and the elders of the people manage them as they please. Their worship consists in dancing, two or three single—and all the rest dance. They have sung Black Jock, Yankee Doodle, or any tune that came into their minds, but no words at all, till very lately, I hear they have begun to use words. Mr. and Mrs. Hodgson have joined them, and they have treated them, as they treat the rest that join them. We have cause to think that Mrs. Hodgson is dissatisfied with her situation, but cannot get from them ; for the Shakers are so artful, that it is almost impossible for any, especially the women to get away from them, but it is probable if you should send for them, they would come home, and it might be better for her, for time and eternity. Their girls are also with the Shakers ; the boys did join them, but have left them again.”

From the Popular Encyclopædia, we find that there was a community of Shakers at Watervliet, near Albany,

founded by a woman of the name of Ann Lee, from Manchester in England, who died at the settlement, in 1784 ; and that their peculiar sentiments and practices harmonized with the statements in the above letter.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. WESLEY'S DEATH.—DISSENSIONS.

1790. At the Conference of this year, Messrs Geo. Holder, Jonathan Hern, and John Wittam were appointed to the Circuit; but after the close of its sittings, circumstances not explained, induced Mr. Wesley to remove Mr. Wittam, and direct Mr. George Lowe, whose name is placed in the Minutes at Thirsk, to take his place. From "The Life and Times" of this good man it appears that the Circuit involved a vast amount of labour, and required the travelling of about four hundred miles, to complete the round. This had led to the appointment of an additional young man, during the previous six months, and Michael Fenwick, whose name had been dropped from the Minutes, was now appointed to succeed him as a helper. He retained his former eccentricities, and about this time penned his celebrated letter to the king, on the state of the nation.

Mr. Hern was a man of no ordinary talent. His sermons were delivered with powerful eloquence, and would have done credit to the first pulpits in the land

The stout hearted often quailed under his energetic preaching. He was a native of Ireland, and is spoken of as "the Irish orator;" and so great was his popularity, that on one occasion at least, the officers and soldiers of the Durham Militia assembled to hear him preach in the open air. He took his stand in the centre of the Market Place, in front of the Head Inn, whilst his auditory forming a circle around him, listened with the earnest attention which marked their high esteem of his ministerial qualifications.

1791. This year an event occurred, which however much it might have been anticipated, fell like an electric shock upon the whole Methodist connexion. March 2nd, the venerable founder of Methodism, the Rev. John Wesley was taken to his eternal rest. He died in his house at City Road, London, in the eighty eighth year of his age, and the sixty-fifth of his ministry. It would be superfluous, after the labours of so many distinguished biographers, to attempt in a narrative like the present, any lengthened sketch of his life and character. Another such extended life of unwearied labour, of indefatigable zeal, of unbounded benevolence, the world has not witnessed since the Apostolic days. The amount of influence he had gained, the firm hold which he had taken of the warmest affections of his people, and the deference which they uniformly paid to his judgment, can only be properly estimated by those, who have had the

opportunity of personal intercourse with his early followers. The happy cheerfulness of his spirits, the liveliness of his conversation, and the kindness of soul which glowed within him, won the hearts of all who came within the circle of his friendship. No wonder that the society in Barnard Castle deeply participated in the general mourning which was manifested at the loss of such a father in Israel, especially when it is taken into account, that for nearly forty years, he had periodically visited the place, and entertained a cordial attachment to the people. When he was in the North in 1790, and his old friends here had heard that there was no likelihood of his visiting them, some of them went to wait upon him at Darlington, to express their great disappointment, and to ascertain if there was yet no possibility of his reaching them. Turning to Mr. Bradford, and anxious to gratify their wishes, he enquired, ‘Do you think we can, Joseph?’ Mr. Bradford replied, he was afraid not,—every day was filled up. In the warmth of his kind hearted soul, he responded, ‘This is the consequence of my letting other people make my plans! Joseph Bradford made my plan, but if I come into the North again, I will take care that Barnard Castle be not left out’.

His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Hern, from those pathetic words of David when he expressed his deep sorrow for the death of Abner, “Know ye not that there is a prince, and a great man fallen this

day in Israel," 2 Samuel 3, 38. The chapel was literally stowed full from end to end, the people being placed in double rows along the forms, and every contrivance adopted, to give as many as possible the opportunity of hearing. Such was the pressure, that one of the beams in the gallery was believed to have cracked; no alarm was created at the time; but when the gallery was taken down nearly thirty years after, the fracture was discovered.

It is to be regretted that the name of a man of such splendid talents as Mr. Hern, should have to be dropped in silence; but this unfortunately was the case, and his appointment to this circuit was the last allotted to him. His easily besetting sin was a strong predilection for ardent spirits, and this proved his bane. Circumstances occurred during the year which led his superintendant to consider it to be his duty to impeach him at the Conference, and the result we have already intimated. The most strenuous exertions were made in his behalf, but as this was not the first offence of the kind, it could not be passed over. His popularity as a preacher excited general sympathy, and a few individuals manifested it to an unjustifiable extent, insomuch that Mr. Holder incurred no small degree of odium, and some risk of personal danger. After the decision of the Conference had transpired, the stewards and principal friends were anxious for the sake of peace, to prevent Mr. Hern from returning

to the town; and were glad to supply his wife and family with funds to take them to Manchester, to which place he retired, and there very soon afterwards ended his days.

At the Conference of this year, an alteration was made in the designation of the Circuit, which had hitherto stood in the Minutes as "The Dales." Barnard Castle, although it had really been the Circuit town from its foundation in 1757, now for the first time appears in that character. Weardale and Allendale, with other places, were formed into a separate round of which Hexham was constituted the head, with six hundred and twenty members apportioned to it, leaving only three hundred and eighty three belonging to Barnard Castle. Yet notwithstanding this curtailment, the Circuit was still sufficiently extensive, stretching across 'Stainmores wintry waste,' embracing the whole of Westmoreland, a small part of Cumberland, as far as Alston to the North, and the whole of Teesdale.

Messrs John Brettell and William Stephenson are recorded as the preachers for Barnard Castle. The latter prior to his entering upon the itinerancy was a resident in Bradford, * Yorkshire, and afterwards for a few years laboured chiefly in Scotland. John Brettell † was a meek and humble follower of Jesus.

* See Methodism in Bradford by Rev. W. Stamp.

† See Atmore's Memorials.

He was born at Stourbridge in 1742, and was awakened when nearly twenty years of age. In about four years afterwards he began to preach, and having laboured some time as a local preacher, came out as a probationer for the regular work in 1771. He travelled about twenty six years, with a short intermission of about three, occasioned chiefly by affliction. He died happy in God, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

1792-6. It is well known that for some years after the death of its founder, the Methodist Connexion was in a very unsettled state. The subject of the administration of the ordinances excited a prolonged controversy, and many influential persons, both preachers and laymen, were found in opposition to each other in their sentiments. Happily the Barnard Castle society was not greatly affected by these knotty questions ; but a sad scene of discord and strife arose from circumstances of a local character. An appointment of a preacher, made by the Conference, was strenuously resisted on what were considered sufficient grounds by the stewards and leaders, but every attempt to procure an alteration proved fruitless. The superintendant espoused the side of his rejected colleague, and failing to appease the officials, forwarded a statement of the affair to the president, Mr. Mather, who immediately replied, by recommending that a fair trial of the man should be made for one year. Upon this the superintendant somewhat imprudently called the society

together, and read the president's letter, accompanying it with some offensive personal remarks against the stewards and leaders. A scene of sad confusion ensued, the decencies of a place of worship were violated, and irritating language freely used on all sides. The only constitutional mode of redress was then had recourse to, by requesting a district meeting that the superintendant might be placed on his trial for disturbing the peace of the society. The chairman replied by a kind note, advising the contending parties to meet together in the spirit of the gospel, and settle their differences amongst themselves. He was soon cheered by the information that they had done so, with pleasing success. But this lull was of very short continuance ; before the close of the year the storm burst out afresh, so that the chairman was again called upon to summon the district together. This was done, and after an attentive hearing of both sides, it was resolved, that the two preachers concerned should leave the town, and not return into it, until the case was finally decided. At the ensuing conference both their names were dropped. The superintendancy of the Circuit was then confided to Mr. A. Seckerson, and Mr. John Dutton, a young man of great promise was sent to his assistance. By the exercise of prudence and kindness, the state of affairs was prevented from becoming so ruinous as might have been anticipated ; a few indeed left the society, but the finances do not appear to

have materially suffered. Mr. Seckerson was a valuable man, and lived long to take an active part in the church, and act as one of the officials in the connexion, enjoying the esteem and respect of his brethren. Mr. Dutton was young in years, and very soon after his appointment here, proceeded to the West Indies, partly on family affairs, but the desire and purpose of his heart was to aid the missions in these islands; but in the mysterious providence of God, he was called to an early rest after only a few weeks residence in Jamaica in 1800.

1796. Mr. Thomas Shaw was this year called out into the itinerant work, from Barnard Castle, where he resided and carried on a respectable business as a shoemaker. He was generally respected in the surrounding neighbourhood for his zeal and integrity. He was called to his reward in 1801. In the Minutes of that year, he is described as a man remarkable for disinterestedness and zeal. He laboured four years in his master's service as a travelling Preacher with considerable success, and died in peace. His last appointment was to Lancaster as Supernumerary. His remains were interred at Long Preston where a tomb-stone was erected to his memory bearing this inscription:—"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear but now mine eye seeth thee."

In the meantime, some who had been dissatisfied in the late struggle opened a separate place of worship

which was supplied by one of the preachers who had been dropped, but had now returned to the town and entered into business.

1797-8. Great agitation prevailed at this period in various parts of the connexion, in consequence of the publications of Alexander Kilham. The society in Barnard Castle was however suffering too seriously from local strife, to allow itself time for joining in connexional disputes. Tossed on the tumultuous waves of discord at home, to have mingled in scenes of disturbance more remote, would only have added to the violence of the storm. One effort was however made to launch it on the troubled sea. A preacher of the name of Alexander Cummins, who had seceded with Kilham, having some little knowledge of the Barnard Castle friends, through having been entertained all night amongst them when once travelling through the place, forwarded a small parcel of pamphlets, entitled "Free enquiry, Mutual deliberation and Liberty of conscience, proved to be the only lasting bonds of union amongst the Methodists." This parcel fell into the hands of Mr. Anthony Steele, who thought it the most prudent course to consult with Mr. Thomas Monkhouse, respecting the best mode of dealing with it. After "mutual deliberation," they agreed to preserve the greatest secrecy respecting the arrival of the publications, and so prevent them being put into circulation. They were accordingly transferred to

the garret of the former, where they remained in quietude for many years, and there the writer subsequently found them in a mutilated condition, the four-footed inhabitants of the attic having taken the 'liberty' of making 'free enquiry' into their pages, leaving evident proof of their ability to 'mark' if not inwardly 'digest' the contents !!!

Soon after, a soldier who had by some means obtained his discharge from the North York militia, came to the place, professing himself to be a Methodist and a preacher; and at that period a preaching soldier was sure to attract attention. He was proposed for admission into the society, but suspicions of his integrity, which were afterwards proved not to have been unfounded, being entertained by some, he was rejected. He then offered himself to the Dissentients, and was allowed regularly to preach amongst them. He made moreover some flaming statements of having received extensive promises of a pecuniary character from a lady of fortune, who had taken him under her wing, and produced a quantity of title deeds as vouchers of having at her death, to enter into possession of large estates in Ireland. In the meantime, a little ready cash for present necessities would be of essential service to him, and such kind friends as had a little money to spare, would be remunerated with something more than the ordinary rate of interest at a future day! With not a few the bait took successfully, abundance

of money flowed in, and he was enabled to drive about the country like a gentleman, attended by his livery servant. Things appeared for a while to go on swimmingly, until having arrived at the extent of what he could grasp, he suddenly decamped, and reaching Edinburgh enlisted into the regular army. The latest account heard of this unhappy man, was that his bones were left to bleach on the fields of Spain, he having fallen a victim to fatigue in marching, during the eventful days of the Peninsular war.

After his departure from the place, an aged preacher from Ireland, who had retired from the itinerancy, came over to support the drooping cause of the opposition society. Marrying a female in this place who possessed a little property, he was enabled to maintain himself comfortably, and continued regularly to officiate in the chapel until some time before his death, which took place February 13th, 1805. The new society was then dissolved.

1798. Barnard Castle was favoured with a friendly visit from the venerated and esteemed Joseph Benson, who was then stationed in the Hull circuit, but had devoted two or three weeks to an excursion amongst his old acquaintances in the north. His visit was rendered more memorable by the deeply impressive and effective sermon which he preached. The time of the half-yearly hirings had just then come round, and probably this circumstance led him to select as

his text, the pertinent inquiry, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The earnest manner in which the preacher recommended the service of his master, and pointed out the ample wages given to those employed in his work, told with gracious effect, and the remembrance of the sermon dwelt for many years after in the minds of those who heard it.

An addition was this year made to the Methodist establishment, by the erection on the south side of the Chapel, of a dwelling house for the superintendant preacher. The cost of the building amounted to upwards of one hundred and fifteen pounds, towards which (including a sum accruing to the trustees from the sale of Moor right) nearly fifty pounds were raised, the remaining part being borrowed; but the whole of the premises were at the time in easy circumstances, and the Trustees had little difficulty to contend with on the score of debt. The new house was pleasantly situated, but was inconveniently small, for its intended purpose.

The statistical account appended to this chapter, affords strong evidence that the Society in Barnard Castle was at this period in anything but a healthy state. It is lamentable to find, that year by year its numbers were diminished, until at length it had dwindled down to seventy seven members. Perhaps at no period since the formation of the Dales Circuit, was the town in a more depressed state in regard to its

spiritual condition. This doubtless may in part be attributed to the effects of that internal strife which has already been alluded to ; but we must also take into account, that the distracted state of national affairs at that time had a most unfavourable influence on religion. The French war occupied general attention ; the failure of the harvest and consequent scarcity and dearness of provision embittered the minds of many ; and the diffusion of Republican principles by the formation of Jacobinical clubs in the manufacturing districts especially, exerted a powerful influence in diverting the attention of men, from the important questions connected with personal salvation. The efforts of the church waxed feebler, and few and powerless were the exertions then put forward to promote the interests of the cause of God. But the pithy saying of an old divine, “ It is sometimes darkest before day break ” was illustrated in the case of the society here. Brighter days of peace and prosperity were at hand, and ‘ the time to favor Zion ’ was now swiftly approaching.

The following statistical tables are extracted from the Circuit records :—

PLACES.			YEARS.										
			1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800	1801
			Nos.										
Barnard Castle	-	-	105	116	108	153	143	102	103	102	99	85	77
Newbiggin	-	-	30	27	28	39	36	33	33	35	27	27	33
Middleton	-		20	18	19	28	21	16	14	13	12	10	9
Egglesstone	-	-	12	11	11	20	15	14	14	13	13	12	..
Cotherstone	-	-	9	6	4	5	7	10	11	11	12	12	..
Newsham	-	-	10	9	8	7	7	7	8	8	6	6	6
Barningham	-	-	6	6	6	7	6	5	6	6	8	5	10
Scargill	-	-	8	9	9	9	8	7	6	5	7	7	8
Staindrop	-	-	13	14	10	14	11	12	12	8	9	..	..
Baldersdale	-	-	8	11	9	6	6	11	12	13	12	9	7
Cockfield and Evenwood			..	14	12	27	22	21	14	15	9	4	..
Lunedale	-	-	..	..	..	10	10	9	8	..	..	..	—
Bowes			..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	7
Bishop Auckland	-		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	28	30	35
Goodley Hill	-	-	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	12
Dummy Hill & Temple Sowerby			15	22	..	..	..	7	9	11	12	10	11
Gamblesby	-	-	41	36	38	36	39	43	40	38	35	40	38
Kirkoswald and Penrith-			7	5	7	6	9	16	10	8	8	8	12
Kirkby Thore	-	-	..	5	5	13	17	19	20	22	22	19	19
Long Martin	-	-	13	..	11	13	19	19	16	16	12	14	16
Gaskel Row	-	-	14	14	12	6	7	..	..	..	..	..	..
Appleby	-	-	15	10	9	14	14	19	18	18	18	18	20
Winton	-	-	9	11	10	10	13	10	11	..	..	..	..
Brough	-	-	10	9	7	13	18	16	15	10	12	10	7
Stainmore	-	-	..	..	12	20	16	17	14	11	15	13	18
Berryholme	-	-	..	..	20	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Beathwaite Green	-		..	..	..	30	31	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ashby Grange	-	-	..	..	3	12	7	6	6	7	6	..	..
Cliburn and Morland	-		..	..	..	..	40	36	27	24	24	12	11
Longwathby	-	-	..	..	..	..	..	..	10	..	..	..	..
Renwick	-	-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
Dufton and Knock	-		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	25
Hilton, Bleathorn &c,	-		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13
Kendal	-	-	20	16	28	45	31	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ravenstonedale	-		18	12	14	11	7	—	—	6	—	—	—

Total Numbers.....383 381 400 554 560 455 437 400 406 361 408

CHAPTER XIV.

REVIVAL OF THE WORK.—SUNDAY SCHOOL.

1803. After the lapse of more than half a century since the standard of the cross, through the means of Methodist preaching, was set up in this place, it is not surprising in passing along to meet with circumstances reminding us of those, who in its earlier days adhered to it, bearing the reproach of Christ. Many of them have dropped into the grave without any other memorial, than that which is engraven on the hearts of those who loved them, but their record is in heaven. To snatch from oblivion, the memory of some of these

“Meek, simple, followers of the Lamb,”

will not be deemed irrelevant: they “rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

About this period, a venerable patriarch of the name of Henry Hunter, was gathered home to God. He was a native of Northumberland, but in the providence of God was led in early life to take up his residence at Barningham, a pleasant village about six miles from Barnard Castle. Here, in the commencement of

Methodism he was truly converted to God, and then opened his doors for the preaching of the gospel, cheerfully providing the ministers of the Most High, with the best entertainment his house could afford. He was the father of Methodism in Barningham, and through a long life maintained an upright and irreproachable character, so that for many long years his name was precious in the remembrance of those who had had the opportunity of appreciating his worth. He was the leader of the little band of faithful souls who were united together at that place, and occasionally exhorted the people of the surrounding neighbourhood, to flee from the wrath to come. He rejoiced to attend the regular Love-feasts at Barnard Castle, Arkingthdale and other places ; and he was spared through a long series of years to cheer with his presence, and with his lively communications, those hallowed scenes of spiritual enjoyment. When his head was silvered o'er and his broad muscular frame was bending beneath the pressure of the attendant infirmities of old age, his heart was as lively and in as good tune as ever, and recollecting 'the day of small and feeble things,' he would spring from his seat in the Barnard Castle lovefeast, and casting his eye over the assembled congregation, whilst the tears were streaming down his face, would break forth in exclaiming "Bless God ! there is a goodly company of us here to day, but I can remember the time, when a white sheet would have

covered us all." After a long life devoted to the service of God, he came to his grave "in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season," witnessing with his latest breath the guardian care and faithfulness of his God.

At the Conference of this year Mr. Thomas Graham, a young man from the west side of the circuit, was called out into the ministry. He was a member of the Society at Long Martin, near Appleby, and had been employed in his own neighbourhood as a local preacher for about six years. He laboured in various parts of the connexion, about forty one years, preaching the gospel of his divine master with all faithfulness, and discharging the trust reposed in him with all fidelity, until compelled by growing infirmities to retire from the regular work. He died suddenly in London, where he was on a visit in 1845.

Another of the worthies of Methodism, the Rev. Thomas Coke, D.D., paid his first visit to Barnard Castle in the month of December, 1802. The object of his journey to this and the principal societies in the north of England, was to awaken the sympathies of the people in behalf of the perishing heathen, and to advocate the claims of our missionary cause, then comparatively in its infancy. He preached on two successive evenings from Matthew, vi, 19, 20, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," &c., and Luke 14. 20. "If any man will come after me and hate

not &c.” His appeals to the liberality of the people both in public and private, were very generously responded to. There is in the society book, an entry of two pounds ten shillings, for Dr. Coke’s expenses, and on the contra side, credit is given for one pound seven shillings and sixpence, as special contributions which had been made in liquidation thereof, so that in all probability the full proceeds of the public and private collections, would go to the augmentation of the Missionary fund.

1803. At the Conference, Brough was constituted the head of a circuit, including Penrith, Gamblesby and its neighbourhood, together with all the societies in Westmoreland which had previously belonged to Barnard Castle circuit. By this division, two hundred and thirteen members were transferred to Brough leaving two hundred and ten to Barnard Castle. The step was no doubt judicious, the round previously being too extensive, not only requiring the maintenance of a horse, but involving a heavy tax on the physical powers of the preachers, some of whom were advanced in years, and unable to cope with lengthened journies, over wild barren moors.

Messrs Thomas Ingham and John Doncaster were appointed to Barnard Castle. Their ministry appears to have been made the means of the introduction of fresh life-blood into the languishing frame of Methodism in this town. Mr. Doncaster especially was rendered

signally useful. His preaching talent was highly popular, drawing immense congregations to the sanctuary of God. The selection of the most solemn and impressive subjects of discourse, especially on the Sabbath evening, interspersed with a rich variety of striking anecdotes, awakened the attention of his hearers, and proved a source of great attraction to the house of God. In addition to this, he exerted himself in the adoption of special means, "to seek the wandering sons of men," preaching in the market place and public streets, where listening crowds congregated together, and hung upon his lips, as he invited them to 'buy wine and milk without money and without price.' He visited moreover the most dense localities, and sought and obtained admission into the humble dwellings of the poor, where he held forth all the words of this life. The cause of Methodism here is indebted in no small degree to the labours of this messenger of the Churches, by whose instrumentality it was elevated to a position of respectability which it long retained. The circuit was favoured with his ministry the succeeding year along with that of Mr. William Sanderson.

1805-6. The impetus thus communicated to the cause, was well sustained by their successors Messrs John Farrar and Marshall Claxton. Mr. Farrar was then in the prime and vigour of his days ; his ministry bold—faithful—and energetic ; a few quaint phrases and singular allusions, occasionally bursting forth in

the vehemence of his stirring—applicatory addresses : but his pulpit qualifications generally, commanded high respect. The preaching of the truth was accompanied with the divine blessing, and a number of, promising young persons of both sexes, were added to the society. Special prayer meetings for the new converts were held in the house of Mr. Claxton, and for some time nearly every meeting was signalized by the translation of one or more souls into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, whilst at the same time, believers were quickened.

On the 14th March, 1807, Richard Steele, Jun. the last surviving descendant of the sainted Jacob Rowell, escaped to the realms of bliss. Though blessed with the restraining power of grace from early years, yet it was not till he had attained the age of eighteen, that he was savingly brought to God. The death of a beloved cousin was sanctified in the awakening of him to a sense of his sin and danger, and her faithful admonitions from the bed of death, forcibly entered his soul. He sought for and obtained redemption through the blood of the Lamb. Very soon after this blessed change, he was attacked by that disease which hurried him to the tomb. But his confidence was unshaken “I have not a shadow of doubt” was his dying testimony, “I know in whom I have believed ! I know to whom I have committed my all ! I shall be with him for ever ! Glory be to God !” His last words were

expressive of entire resignation to the will of God. He was a young man of good natural talents, truly amiable in his disposition, and greatly beloved by all who knew him ; and by his early departure the hopes of the church in finding in him a valuable member, were blasted.

Notwithstanding the circuit had been recently divided, yet from the attention required to places of rising importance, there was a sufficient amount of labour to tax the energies of two ministers. The work of each of them comprised two weeks in the town and vicinity, and two in the country. All the journies had to be performed on foot, there being no horse provided ; and the remuneration, although an improvement on primitive days was far from being abundant. In the Society Book we find the following entry, to which the signatures of the two preachers are attached "The Stewards of this Society agree that the fortnight's board shall be, one pound two shillings, as long as the Society can afford it." It ought at the same time to be stated in explanation, that this sum was paid to the preacher, for board during his fortnight in the town only, so that the average amount was five shillings and four pence per week.

Bishop Auckland, now the head of a respectable circuit was one place, which was presenting a fair prospect for successful labour. Mr. John Wilkinson, a currier and carpenter's business in the place, and

being an acceptable local preacher was rendered eminently useful in that neighbourhood, in introducing the gospel into several places where Methodism had previously obtained no footing. Every Sabbath day either in the town or country he was diligently employed in preaching the everlasting gospel, whilst the integrity of his character procured him universal respect. He exerted himself in procuring the erection of a chapel in Bishop Auckland, and succeeded in obtaining a comfortable place for the worship of God. For twenty five years he was a successful local preacher and a faithful class leader, always ready to every good work. He died in great peace in 1827. He was father of the Rev. Samuel Wilkinson, missionary in New South Wales.

At the conference in 1807, Weardale was again incorporated with the Barnard Castle circuit, and continued in connexion with it, during the ten following years. The work in that dale had not prospered satisfactorily, since it had been divided from Barnard Castle in 1791, and the union which existed in former days, having always been harmonious, and accompanied with happy results, it was considered desirable to try it again. The superintendancy of the enlarged circuit, was committed to the Rev. Cuthbert Whiteside, and the Revds. John Foster and Luke Barlow were his colleagues. Two horses were purchased for their use.

Another of the veteran apostles of the olden time, the venerable Joseph Thompson, finished his life and

labours, this year, at Barnard Castle. He commenced his itinerant career in 1758, and for thirty years was actively and usefully employed in proclaiming the gospel of the blessed God. His preaching talent was of a respectable order ; his ministry sound, judicious and faithful, unaccompanied by any shewy embellishment. He had been stationed in several of the most important circuits in the north, and was generally acceptable to the people. He enjoyed the confidence of the founder of Methodism as will appear from the following letter addressed to him.

Bristol, September 23rd, 1770.

DEAR JOSEPH, -

“ You are in the right. The most proper time for making the division is in the Quarter Day. I can confide in your prudence, as well as impartiality in greater things than these. Be diligent in the books everywhere, and exact in every point of discipline.”

I am dear Joseph,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

J. WESLEY.

During the last fifteen years of his life he resided in Barnard Castle as a supernumerary, being compelled to retire from the full work of the ministry, in consequence of age and growing infirmities ; he was still ready however to assist in his Master's work, as far as his physical ability enabled him, by leading a class, visiting the sick, and preaching frequently in the

neighbourhood. Dropsy put a somewhat sudden termination to his labours on the 15th October, 1808, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. The record on the Minutes of Conference states :—"He travelled upwards of thirty years with an unblemished character, and general approbation. He was a clear, weighty and practical preacher. His pulpit discourses were faithful explanations of the holy word, and appeals to the consciences of his hearers. He was strictly conscientious in his intercourse both with God and man, and yet he depended solely on the Redeemer's merits for eternal salvation. Some of his last words were "I am nothing, but Christ is all; all is in him and from him, to whom be glory for ever."

In the following year, a new chapel was erected at Middleton-in-Teesdale, under favourable prospects. The necessity for such a building had long been acknowledged, in consequence of the growing prosperity of the place, and the increasing numbers who were inclined to hear. A convenient piece of ground in a front situation was obtained for the erection, and a house opened for the service of God, which has been honoured as the spiritual birth place of many souls.

1810. In the beginning of this year, a Sunday School was opened in connection with Methodism in Barnard Castle ; the origin of which from its important bearing on the future prosperity of the work of God, deserves

to be placed on record. About seven years before this, the Independant Church had commenced one in their chapel in Newgate street, still there was ample scope for an additional institution of this kind in the town, in consequence of great numbers of children being sent at a very early age to the factory, and being thus deprived of the opportunity of obtaining even a secular education. Commiseration for the destitute condition of these young people, who were growing up in sin and ignorance, prompted a humble but zealous man of the name of William Emmerson, to take the initiatory step in this work, by devoting a portion of the sabbath to the instruction of the children in the parish workhouse. Joshua Todd came forward to his assistance, and was a valuable coadjutor in methodizing the work. Very soon, other children in the vicinity of the house, expressing a wish to be admitted, the spacious dining room became too small for their accommodation. After ineffectual attempts to obtain the use of any schoolroom in the place, it was determined to make application to the trustees of the chapel for the use of that building, to accommodate the numbers who were disposed to attend. After some hesitation this was conceded, and in the summer of 1810, the doors of the sanctuary were thrown open, from ten till twelve o'clock in the forenoon, and again from one to three in the afternoon, for Sunday school instruction. Scholars came pouring in abundantly,

and soon upwards of four hundred names were entered in the books, whilst many well qualified individuals, both young and old, offered their services as gratuitous teachers, and some of the more influential members of the society and of the congregation, acted as superintendants or members of committee. Great moral and spiritual good as well as secular benefits resulted from this institution, many of the children thus brought under religious training, afterwards became the subjects of gracious impressions, and were gathered into the fold of the church, some of whom eventually became ministers of righteousness for the churches of Christ, and others Missionaries of the cross in foreign lands. This excellent institution has since then continued to receive a distinguished share of public approbation and support. The number of scholars it is true, is not so great as formerly, schools of a similar character having since been commenced in connection with the National church, and by dissenting denominations.

1812. In the early part of this year, an anxious desire to be favoured with the appointment of the District Meeting here, being entertained by some of the principal friends of Methodism, a respectful application was made to the venerable chairman, the Rev. Samuel Bardsley, urging the claims of an old established circuit to enjoy this privilege. His reply addressed to Mr. A. Steele is truly characteristic of the decision and Christian simplicity of the writer.

Bank Head, February 25th, 1812.

Dear Sir,

May Israel's God ever bless you and yours, Amen ! I think it very reasonable that the district should meet at Barnard Castle, and have therefore appointed the meeting at Barnard Castle, on Wednesday morning, July 8th, at six o'clock, then and there to proceed to business.

I am your affectionate brother,

For Christ's sake,

SAMUEL BARDSLEY.

At the time appointed, the brethren assembled accordingly. The Rev. T. Simmonite preached on the preceding evening. On Wednesday evening, the Chairman, followed by the Revds. T. Vasey, Jun., A. Hutchinson and Thomas Gill, and on Thursday evening the Rev. J. Slack. Messrs. Henry Ranson and James Fowler, preached trial sermons on the Wednesday and Thursday mornings, this being the commencement of their ministerial career. Much hallowed and gracious influence attended these interesting ministrations. The sermon of the chairman was particularly touching ; especially when he referred with artless simplicity, to those excellent men who had been called out into the ministry from this town ; as well as those whose flesh was resting in hope in the churchyard, and whose graves he had been visiting. All seemed

deeply affected whilst listening to his pathetic strains, and preachers and people were alike melted into tears.

On the 19th November of this year the Rev. Dr. Coke paid his second and last visit to Barnard Castle. He preached from Solomon's Song, chapter 8, verse 5, "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness, &c.," and on the following evening from 1st Corin. 3. 18, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise" &c. He was accompanied by his second wife, formerly Miss Loxdale, a lady who had been honoured with the correspondence of Mr. Wesley. She was at this time in a state of great physical debility, and about a fortnight after leaving Barnard Castle, she died at York, in full assurance of a better world. In the latter end of the year following, this devoted servant of God embarked for Ceylon, having consecrated his life to India. His object was to organize a mission there, a project which had long engaged his serious consideration. In the course of his voyage, he was suddenly called to his reward, and his remains were committed to the mighty deep, there to slumber, till the sea shall give up her dead. The Doctor was greatly respected here, and very successful in obtaining contributions to the Mission funds, in some quarters where others would have failed. The amount collected at this time in public and private was very considerable for the place, and amounted to £33 12s. In the course of his applications from door to door, the

Dr. waited upon a retired military officer of high rank, and by his courteous demeanour, and earnest advocacy of his cause, succeeded in unloosing the strings of a purse, which was seldom opened for purposes of benevolence.

1813. At the Conference, Robert Morton, a native of Barnard Castle, was called into the general work and having travelled for many years in various parts of the kingdom, has now retired as Supernumerary.

The Revd. Messrs Garbut, Sedgwick and Haswell, were appointed to the Barnard Castle and Weardale circuit, and laboured in great harmony with each other, and in much affection and favour with the people. A blessed revival of religion broke out under their ministry at Stanhope in Weardale, a place which had been visited by Mr. Wesley in 1788 and 90. Here, during the first year of their labours, the number in Society was doubled, and amounted to more than one hundred and forty members. One very useful instrument in this work was the late Jacob Gill, a very acceptable local preacher and class leader. Jacob was brought up at Garrigill, and on account of the humble circumstances of his parents, was obliged in very early youth to commence working for his living, without having received the advantages of education. After his conversion to God, he applied himself to learn to read, and soon gave evidence of original genius. He was called out to be a local preacher, for which work

he possessed no ordinary qualifications. Endowed with a ready utterance, a sound judgment, and deep penetration into the sacred Scriptures, he shewed himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed. The first time he made his appearance before a large congregation in Barnard Castle, the friends were astonished to find that under the garb of a working miner, a mind of such sterling character should be hid. They immediately set to work and collecting a few pounds, equipped him from head to foot in a more clerical garb, so that Jacob appeared what he really was, a very respectable preacher. He died rather suddenly at Egglestone about the year 1826.

The result of the first years labours of the before mentioned brethren, was an addition to the society of about two hundred members, and the increase of the following year being one hundred more, the total number reached 1342, which was more than double what it was when the two circuits were re-united seven years previously. The financial as well as the spiritual affairs of the circuit were in great prosperity.

CHAPTER XV.

MISSIONARY ERA.—JOHN SMITH.

1814. The year 1814 may be regarded as the commencement of a new era in the Missionary department of the Methodist Connexion. Hitherto its funds had been sustained chiefly through the influence and exertions of Dr. Coke, but the lamented death of the Dr. and the increased expenditure of the work in the East, indicated the necessity of adopting some further expedients to replenish the Missionary treasury. Public meetings were held at some of the principal places, such as Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, Sheffield, Manchester, York, Newcastle &c. These awakened peculiar interest, and an ardent flame of Christian philanthropy and zeal was kindled all around. The holy fire was not long in reaching Barnard Castle. After the Newcastle Meeting, five young men agreed with one another to subscribe a penny per week each, and in a little time their contributions amounted to fourteen shillings and nine pence. Encouraged by this small beginning, the preachers on the circuit, assisted by some zealous friends on the spot, exerted

themselves to form a regular **Missionary Association**. Being disappointed of the assistance of Dr. Bunting, who had been invited to give his valuable aid, they set to work in the month of January, 1815, without any public meeting. A stirring address was printed and distributed through the town and circuit, subscriptions were solicited from house to house, and regular collectors appointed. Money flowed in apace; and by the month of March, 1816, the Committee were enabled to report the receipt of the following sums :—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Barnard Castle	47	16	4	Newbiggin	3	8	2
Cockfield & Evenwood ..	1	1	0	Middleton	2	3	6
Staindrop	0	17	0	Eggilestone	1	4	0
Bowes	3	16	9	Bishop Auckland ..	2	12	0
Cotherstone	1	17	0	High House, Weardale	18	16	4
Mickleton	3	3	0	Westgate	6	7	10
Dalton	4	0	0	Stanhope	11	4	10
Scargill	3	12	1	Frosterly	3	6	4
Barnard Castle Moor ..	2	4	0	Eastgate	6	1	0
Woodlands	1	15	6	Rookhope	3	19	0
Hamsterly	1	6	4	Wolsingham	5	11	5
				Public Collections ..	6	11	6

£144 14 11

In the month of May 1816 the District Meeting being held at Barnard Castle, the occasion was selected as a suitable opportunity for holding the first Missionary Meeting there. The Chairman of the District, the Revd. John Kershaw, occupied the chair, supported on either hand by a host of speakers, each willing and

ready to lend his aid in advocating the claims of the heathen world to Christian sympathy and support. If the platform could not boast an extraordinary array of talent, there was at least no lack of speakers. The Revd. Messrs Dixon, Hainsworth, Floyd, Laycock, Morris, Kemp, Benjamin Hudson, Pearson, Adshead, Beckwith, Sedgwick, Armitage, and Mr. Henry Smith, of Darlington, moved and seconded the various resolutions. The character of the speeches delivered on the occasion was somewhat desultory ; indeed the number of the speakers is itself a sufficient indication, that at this early period of platform work, the advocates of the Missionary cause, were but just trying their apprentice hands, and were as yet scarcely prepared to deliver well arranged orations in support of the enterprise. Towards the end of the year 1817, an opportunity occurring of securing the aid of a more efficient staff of speakers who were then visiting Darlington, the first Anniversary was held, attended by a great concourse of people. The meeting was in the afternoon, the Revd John Stephens in the chair, when interesting addresses were delivered by the Revds. J. Storry, Braithwaite, Pilter, Everett, and T. Stead. In the evening the Chairman preached from Psalms 119, v. 136. "Rivers of waters run down" &c., and immediately after he had finished, a second sermon was delivered by the Rev. J. Everett, from Isaiah 40, v. 5. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" &c. The fame of these sermons, and the

missionary addresses formed a general topic of conversation for some time, and succeeding anniversaries tended to advance the interest of the good cause, yet more and more. The most popular speakers were sought for, and the most enthusiastic delight was manifested in listening to the statements of such distinguished men as Drs. Newton, and Hannah, the Revds. J. Anderson, Fox, R. Wood, Bromley, and William Dawson. Great numbers of strangers from nearly forty miles round, were attracted, by the far-famed Missionary Meetings at Barnard Castle, to come and see for themselves, and the collections continued to increase till at length they exceeded the sum of one hundred pounds ; an amount which must be acknowledged to be unprecedentedly large, when it is remembered that the population of the town did not exceed 4000. For a few years the excitement was maintained, the Missionary festival being a high gala day, attended by multitudes of people in vehicles of various descriptions, causing the town to assume all the lively appearance of a Fair day. The religious treat furnished on these hallowed occasions, proved a source of high gratification to all present, and will doubtless long live amongst their most pleasing recollections. But it could not reasonably be expected that such interest could be sustained. The introduction of similar meetings into the neighbourhood gradually diminished their novelty, and lessened their attraction:

but the Missionary cause still continues to number amongst its ardent friends, many warm hearts within the bounds of Barnard Castle.

1815-16. During the course of this year, Barnard Castle lost one of its most efficient local preachers by death, Mr. Thomas Driver, formerly of Bradford in Yorkshire. He was a blind man, but was remarkable for a very retentive memory, and great skill in reasoning upon controversial divinity. He displayed great ingenuity in finding his road to his appointments, and was not unfrequently employed as the guide of the preachers when first entering upon the circuit. He was poor in this world, and had to support a rising family by travelling the country with small wares. The friends did not fail to recognise his claims, in the distribution of their Poor Fund, yet after all the assistance afforded, he had to drink deep of the chilling stream of poverty. His departure was very sudden—he was in his place on the Sabbath evening in the house of God, but was next morning a lifeless corpse. Mr. Simmonite preached his funeral sermon from Psalm 12. v. 1.—“ Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth,” &c.

1816. At the Conference, Messrs Lilly, John Bumstead and Dakin were appointed to the Barnard Castle and Weardale circuit. Mr. Dakin was a young man of great zeal, and unwearied in his labours to promote the salvation of souls. But his exertions were too great for his constitution to support; and in the course

of a few months, the rupture of a blood vessel compelled him to leave his work and retire to the house of his mother at Castleton in Derbyshire, to try the effects of his native air in recruiting his strength. The change at first appeared to be beneficial, and presuming on his ability to recommence his ministerial labours, he left home to return to his circuit, but got no further than Thirsk, where after lingering a few months he died happy in God, at the house of Mr. T. Bell. The short period of his ministry here, was distinguished by great success, and many were added to the church.

About this period one of the then oldest members of the society, Mr. Thomas Monkhouse was called home to God. His mother had been one of the earliest of those who had espoused the cause of Methodism when its beginnings were small, and through evil report, and good report, held fast the profession of her faith without wavering. Her death was sudden: whilst engaged in prayer with a dying person, she was seized with an illness, which in two days introduced her happy spirit into the paradise of God. Her son was, in his youth, of an independent headstrong spirit, and with a design of escaping the restraints of parental authority, twice left home with the intention of going to sea. His father finding him resolute, at length consented to his engaging in a sea-faring life, which he followed for a few years, voyaging to the coast of Guinea, the West Indies and America. After a protracted absence he returned

and settled in Barnard Castle, with his health much impaired by the changes of climate and the hardships incident to his former occupation. He was induced to attend the preaching of the gospel amongst the Methodists, and being brought to the knowledge of the truth, cast in his lot with the society, of which he continued a consistent and useful member, until the termination of his earthly career. He was long called to suffer under a painful dispensation of divine Providence, being visited with a complaint in his eyes, which eventually terminated in the loss of sight, but under these circumstances manifested perfect resignation to the will of his heavenly Father. In the year 1801, it was his lot to pass still more deeply through the furnace, by reason of severe personal affliction. In this illness, he felt that all the grace he had was called into exercise; but he looked up to his never failing source of help. God answered for himself, by a very powerful application of these words, 'I will lay no more upon thee than I will give strength to bear.' He laid hold of the promise, and from the fulness of his heart, exclaimed 'Lord it is enough!' Indeed, this seasonable and gracious word of consolation proved like a staff for him on which to lean, till he was called to pass over Jordan, and seldom afterwards did he speak at the lovefeasts, or in his class, without referring to the confidence he felt, that this promise would be fulfilled to him. He quietly entered into rest in

the sixty-seventh year of his age, and the forty-second of his Christian pilgrimage, on February 4th, 1817. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. John Bumstead, from the following passage selected by himself,—Eccles. 12. 1. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” Many excellent traits of his character might be added, but “his works do follow him.”

1817. At the Conference, the Revds. T. Rogerson, N. Elliott and John Smith, 5th, were stationed at Barnard Castle. Mr. Smith, who was then a young man in the second year of his itinerancy, was afterwards well known in the connexion, as a warm zealous revivalist. His memoirs, published by the late Rev. R. Treffry, Jun., have obtained an extensive circulation. He had just left the York circuit, where he had the privilege of sitting at the feet of a father in Israel, the excellent John Nelson, (a grandson of the far famed John Nelson of Birstal), and entered upon his work here, baptized with the love of souls. A child-like simplicity of spirit marked his whole demeanour, both in and out of the pulpit, and his labours in public and in pastoral visitation were incessant, in pursuing the great object of his life, the salvation of perishing men. The keenness of the air in the north greatly tried his delicate constitution, in which there appeared a tendency to disease of a pulmonary character, and he was obliged partially to suspend his labours: but no

sooner did he acquire renewed strength than he speedily expended it in the prosecution of his work, "not counting his life dear unto him," so that he might win souls to Christ. His efforts were eminently successful, and those hallowed seasons of spiritual enjoyment, which distinguished the period of his ministrations, have left delightful reminiscences, in the hearts of those whose privilege it was to be associated with him. Many souls were borne from on high, who rejoiced to acknowledge him as their father. The circuit was anxious to have the continuance of his labours for another year, and his venerable superintendent with tears in his eyes, pleaded before the conference, how he had served him as a son in the Gospel, and that from his own infirmities, through age, he ought to be allowed so valuable a coadjutor; but it was deemed prudent to remove him to a warmer climate, and he was sent to Brighton.

In the spring of 1818, Jane Philipson, another of the first Methodists was gathered to her fathers. Her mother dying when she was young, she was brought up by Joshua and Jane Hammond, two pious characters who have been more than once referred to in the early part of this narrative. She was converted to God in early life, and joined the society in 1763, the year previous to the building of the chapel, and regardless of the insults and derisive jeers of those who manifested every species of hostility to the work, she cheerfully

lent her services in bearing water, to prepare the mortar that was used in the erection of God's house. During the greater portion of her pilgrimage, she was a timid doubting Christian, and though her outward walk and conversation were unblameable in the eye of the world, yet the humbling and disparaging views which she entertained of herself, often depressed her mind and robbed her of spiritual joy. Towards the close the scene brightened, and her declining days were cheered by gracious manifestations of the goodness of God. She frequently repeated that delightful hymn, commencing,

"Jesu, lover of my soul,"

always reiterating the last two lines of the first stanza,

"Safe into the haven guide,

O, receive my soul at last,"

as peculiarly expressive of the ardent feelings of her heart. A little before her departure she said to a friend who called in to see her, "I shall not be long, but I have a desire to depart and be with Christ." In this heavenly composure of mind, she entered the joy of her Lord, March, 1818. Her funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. T. Rogerson.

1819. Weardale was reached from Barnard Castle circuit, and for a separate station, having Wolsingham for its northern boundary. Mr. Todd, and W. Dowson were appointed preachers proposed to dispose of the heavy work on foot. The health of Mr. Todd was

gave way ; a nervous debility overtook him, and led him at the ensuing Conference to seek an easier station. In the mean time the cause continued to progress satisfactorily, and the gradual and steady increase of the congregation in the town, was such as to lead many of the friends of Methodism earnestly to desire a larger and more commodious building for the worship of God. The impracticability of enlarging the old chapel was acknowledged by all ; but the difficulty of obtaining ground in an eligible situation for the erection of a new one, long presented an insurmountable barrier, to the accomplishment of the work. At length in the commencement of the year 1822, a spacious piece of ground, with some old buildings which had formerly been occupied for malting purposes was offered, and a purchase effected, for the sum of three hundred and twenty pounds. Active steps were immediately taken for the erection of a new chapel, and the late Rev. John Rawson, who then resided at Reeth, in the Richmond circuit, was brought over to prepare a plan, and superintend the building as far as he conveniently could. A subscription was at once opened for the accomplishment of the object, and whilst about six or seven of the principal friends came forward with their offerings of fifty pounds each, a number of individuals less wealthy, but not less zealous, poured in their smaller sums, until the trustees found that from this source they had about six hundred and ten

pounds placed at their disposal. The old premises were sold for five hundred pounds, and as the debt that was upon them did not exceed one hundred and sixty, a handsome overplus thus became available towards the new erection. The annual District Meeting being held at Barnard Castle in the Spring of the year, the foundation of the new chapel was laid at that time, in the presence of the brethren assembled. The chairman, the late Rev. John Simpson, Sen., assisted by the Rev. John Rawson laid the stone, and the Rev. John Sedgwick preached. Though there had been no intention of making a collection, a few persons voluntarily placed their offerings on the stone, and a sum of three or four pounds was thus received. The new building, the dimensions of which were fifty eight feet by forty-nine, proceeded rapidly, and by the commencement of the following year was ready for the celebration of divine worship. The Rev. Dr. Newton came over, through a heavy fall of snow, to open it : he had been engaged in some anniversary services at Clitheroe, and was under the necessity of having a guide to find his way across the moors from Kettlewell to Middleham, at which place he unexpectedly arrived the preceding evening, in time to favor them with a sermon. The next day, January 23rd, 1823, he came onward to Barnard Castle, and preached two excellent sermons, in the afternoon and evening. The result of the collections at the opening,

including the sabbath services, by Messrs. Pilter and Bromley, was eighty-two pounds, twelve shillings and a penny. In addition to the chapel, two commodious houses for the residence of the preachers were erected and a long room fitted up for a Sabbath school. Another dwelling-house situated in the chapel yard, the possession of which was calculated to secure a more convenient access to the chapel was also purchased for two hundred and fifty pounds. The total amount of expenditure upon the premises, was little short of three thousand pounds ; and after every exertion had been made, there remained a debt upon them of about eighteen hundred, but as the seat rents realized about ninety pounds per annum, and the income from rents nearly forty more, the trustees were never placed in pecuniary difficulty : and they had the gratification of securing for the promotion of the cause of God, a compact set of premises scarcely exceeded for beauty of situation by any in the connexion, and well adapted to the required purpose.

CHAPTER XVI.

SKETCHES OF DEPARTED WORTHIES.

1823. We have now traced Methodism in Barnard Castle from its earliest and humble commencement, to the most prosperous period of its history : the light that first skirted the tops of these mountains had been gradually increasing in its lustre, till it arrived at the glory of a blessed gospel day. We need have no hesitation in pronouncing the five years anterior to the opening of the new chapel, and the five subsequent ones as the palmy days of Methodism in Barnard Castle. Never were the congregations better, the number of members larger, or the funds contributed to the carrying on of the work of God, in a more flourishing state than at this time. The society had increased to three hundred and sixty, and comprised a number of zealous, active, hearty labourers, in the various departments of God's vineyard, making the wilderness to smile as a fruitful field. At the Conference of 1823, the Rev. John Storry was appointed to Barnard Castle, in conjunction with the Rev. John Kemp, a zealous, faithful and devoted man of God,

who had travelled the circuit the preceding year. The appointment of Mr. Storry was a distinguished privilege, and was particularly opportune, in taking place so soon after the opening of the new place of worship. His pulpit talent was of a high order, exceedingly popular and attractive, and such as had previously commanded for him some of the choicest circuits in the connexion. But at his own request, and amongst other reasons, that he might be near to an aged mother who had come to reside in the town, and thus cheer her declining years on her passage to the tomb, the Conference granted the appointment. Anxious to elevate the position of Methodism to a standard that it had not yet attained, he threw his whole soul into the work, and his efforts were crowned with the desired success. His preaching attracted a great increase of hearers; while the urbanity of his manners, and his kind affectionate conciliatory spirit, won over many hearts. Both in the town and circuit, he was received with universal respect, and results still greater were anticipated as the fruit of his toil. But the return of an afflictive disorder in the wind pipe, which had impeded his labours in a former circuit, compelled him before the close of the first year of his ministry, to desist from public speaking, though he continued to reside for two years longer in the town as a supernumerary. At the Conference of 1826, he resumed active service in the ministry, in which he laboured with great ac-

ceptance, until the visitation of Asiatic Cholera in 1832, very suddenly terminated his useful life. He died at London, in the Lambeth circuit.

1829. Whilst we hail with joyful emotions the increase of the Church by the addition of new members, yet we are ever and anon reminded of that part of the host which has crossed the flood, and escaped the windy storm and tempest. To some of these we have already referred ; but it cannot be expected that in a concise narrative like the present, we can make specific mention of even a small portion of those who have died in the Lord. Whilst the names of some have been recorded on account of their connection with Methodism in its earliest days, and whose memorial might otherwise have perished ; and of others, because of that position of usefulness, which they so pre-eminently occupied ; yet many more, no less entitled to be remembered on the score of piety and general character, must necessarily be passed over. But their record is in heaven. Some notice however is justly due to the memory of Mr. William Dixon, one of the most indefatigable and laborious local preachers with whom the circuit was ever favoured. To him it was no luxury to have a sabbath unemployed, he was not only ready to do his own work, (and he always had the lion's share) but cheerfully helped any of his brethren, who well knew to whom to apply in case of need. In this work in which he so much delighted, he con-

tinued to the end, preaching twice on the last sabbath he spent on earth, notwithstanding he felt some indications of disease lurking in his frame. His departure was remarkably sudden. Whilst sitting at the supper table in the house of his friend Mr. Monkhouse, without a moment's notice he was called home. The solemn event produced a powerful sensation in the place, and the numbers who attended his interment, testified the general respect in which his character was held.

1830. At the Conference, an excellent young man, John Porter, a native of Barningham or its vicinity, was called into the ministry. In early life he was truly converted to God, and gave decisive evidence of the reality of a divine change ; beginning to exhort those around him to flee from the wrath to come, he was taken on the local preacher's plan, and distinguished himself by burning zeal for the salvation of souls, and diligent application to the study of the sacred Scriptures. He was appointed to travel in the Downham circuit, but in the course of a few weeks after his arrival there, was obliged through serious affliction to retire from his work. He returned to his father's house, but the disease was too deeply seated to be removed by medical skill, and in the beginning of July 1831, he died happy in God in the 26th year of his age. He was a youth of great promise, but the Great Head of the Church knoweth best when it is time to call home his servants. His remains are interred in Barningham church-yard.

1834-5. About this period the Connexion generally was in a disturbed state, in consequence of the measures pursued in the case of Dr. Samuel Warren. Public meetings were got up in several places, and the waves of agitation rose high. This circuit did not escape being involved in the wide spread dissatisfaction, as there were numbers within its bounds who were disposed to sympathize with the views of those who rallied round the doctor. At the March Quarter Day of 1835, a host of official men from various parts of the circuit assembled at Barnard Castle, for the purpose of passing certain resolutions, similar to those which had been proposed at other places. Never was the Quarterly Meeting so numerously attended, and for about six hours, a stormy debate was prolonged, the Superintendent declining to put the resolutions to the meeting, which at length broke up in dissatisfaction. Some months afterwards, the Doctor, attended by many of his friends from Liverpool, Darlington, &c., held a public meeting in the Primitive Methodist Chapel. A crowd of people (as is generally the case when strife of any kind is going on) assembled. but no very important results followed. A small number, probably not ten in the town, left the society, and joined another section of the church; and in Teesdale four or five local preachers, and a few members seceded, and formed a separate interest. But this has all passed away, and upon the whole, it is cause of

gratitude that the societies in the Barnard Castle circuit escaped with so small an amount of injury.

1835. On the 21st December, Robert Philipson, husband of Jane Philipson already mentioned, and one of the veterans of the olden time, found his long sought rest. He was a native of Weardale, and had been brought to God previous to the great revival in that dale, before referred to. In his younger days he occasionally acted as local preacher, but is better known as being for more than fifty years an excellent class-leader. Having outlived nearly all his early companions, he was at the advanced age of eighty-five years, gathered home as a shock of corn fully ripe for the garner. In a paper written by his own hand, and found in his own house, he thus expresses the emotions of his heart:—"I leave it as my testimony that God has been a Father to the fatherless, the stranger's shield and the orphan's stay—even to hoary hairs, and to old age has he carried me, and not one good word hath failed, of all that he promised. He has done all things well. This God is my God, he will guide me unto death and through death, and afterwards bring me to glory."

1838. At the Conference, Barnard Castle Circuit having gradually increased until it numbered 1,179 members, was once more divided. A large field for commercial operations had been opened out in the neighbourhood of Bishop Auckland, and one village

after another was springing up into existence, so that a fair prospect of sustaining a separate interest in that quarter presented itself. The leading friends in the circuit had always worked together harmoniously, and a mutual esteem and attachment had so long prevailed, that some reluctance was at first manifested to dissolve a union which had prospered so well. But the necessity of the case, and the expectation of future advantages to the interests of Methodism, over-ruled other considerations, and Bishop Auckland became the head of a new circuit, which is extending its boundaries and promises fair to maintain a respectable position in the North.

In the summer of this year, John Todd, Esq., of Barningham, died, having previously executed a deed by which he conveyed to five trustees the sum of £1,600: £100 of it to be appropriated to the providing of a house for the residence of a preacher in the village, and the interest of the remainder to be applied to the support of the said preacher, to be elected by the Trustees. Mr. Todd was not himself a member of the society, but the desire of his heart was, to perpetuate Methodist preaching in the place and its vicinity.

The trustees made application to the President of the Conference, to send them a young man, until they should have sufficient time to prepare a house for the reception of a resident preacher. The Rev. William Jessop was accordingly sent, and his support was paid

from the proceeds of the endowment. A bequest so noble, may, through the blessing of God, become of essential service to that neighbourhood.

1839. A very important connexional movement of a cheering character, took place at this period. The centenary year of Methodism had arrived, and many were desirous of perpetuating the remembrance of it, by some public expression of their joy and gratitude for its benefits. Meetings were held, first at Manchester, as being the most central place, and afterwards in most of the principal towns throughout the kingdom, the object of which was, to raise funds for certain connexional purposes, sufficiently specified in the general Report since published, and into a detail of which it is unnecessary to enter. Upwards of £216,000 was the pecuniary result of this popular movement. The Barnard Castle Circuit was neither last nor least, in co-operating in this important work. A public meeting was held, and a tea meeting in connexion with it, and the noble sum of £318 14s. was raised, as a testimony of the deep interest that was excited, and the high esteem entertained for that ministry, which had been made such an extensive blessing, not to this kingdom only, but to distant parts of the earth.

At the same period, the erection of a new Sabbath School and Vestry was commenced at Barnard Castle. It was named the Centenary School, and is pleasantly situated contiguous to the chapel premises. A respect-

ful application being made to the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood, some handsome subscriptions were sent in, which enabled the trustees to complete the work without leaving much more than one hundred pounds debt, one half of which was soon afterwards liquidated. A Day School conducted on the Glasgow training system, has since been opened on the premises, and continues in successful operation.

At different periods during the ten years just referred to, some promising young men were supplied from Barnard Castle, for the general work of the ministry. The Rev. T. S. Monkhouse was called out in 1831. The Rev. Hilton Cheesebrough, missionary in the West Indies in 1833. The Rev. Thomas Buddle, missionary to New Zealand in 1835. The Rev. Michael Johnson in 1838, and the Rev. Hugh Johnson in 1840. All these brethren are now preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God in various places, with acceptance and success. The Rev. Lancelot Railton, who was called out in 1838, is also a native of Barnard Castle, though not resident there, when he commenced his ministry.

1844. Before we draw this narrative to a close, some respect is due to the memory of an aged patriarch, Simeon Holroyd, who after a long life of active labour in the church of God, was this year called home to his eternal reward. He was born at Halifax, in Yorkshire,

about the year 1748. His mother died in giving him birth, leaving him a helpless infant, to the care of his surviving parent. He was trained up in the religious ordinances of the Friends, or people commonly called Quakers, of whose society his father was a member ; and he so far retained the peculiarities of this respectable body of people, that through life he varied little from their costume, in wearing the plain breasted coat, and his general mode of address to his friends was by the familiar epithet "thou." Scarcely had he reached the eighth year of his age, ere his remaining parent was snatched away by death, and he was cast on the protection of that God, who hath promised to be "the Father of the fatherless." The bereaved orphan was taken under the charge of an elder brother and sister ; and he often in subsequent life, gratefully acknowledged the providential hand of his heavenly Father, in "giving him bread to eat, and raiment to put on," at that particular period, which he recollected as a time of general scarcity, in so much that many perished through want, and were sometimes found dead on the highway. He was deeply affected by the death of his father, and for a while serious impressions fastened on his tender mind, but soon alas, died away.

At a suitable age he was bound apprentice to his brother, to be instructed in the business of a stuff manufacturer ; and his brother having joined the Methodist society, endeavoured in the true spirit of

fraternal kindness, to promote the best interests of his young charge, by inculcating a diligent attendance on divine ordinances, and instructing him in the principles of our holy religion. The effect of this early religious culture was apparent, in that earnest heed which for a time he gave to the good counsel imparted, and the delight with which he mingled in the services of the sanctuary. But through means of ungodly associations, the promise of good things to come was blasted in the bud, and evil communications led to his entrance upon a path of much misery and suffering. His ungodly companions persuaded him not to think of spending the best part of his days, in what they ignorantly termed the gloomy and melancholy service of God, and recommended him to throw off the shackles of restraint, and assert his own independence. This pernicious counsel was too fascinating for him to withstand, and resolving to see the world and enjoy its pleasures, he set out on his inconsiderate ramble without communicating his intentions to his friends. On arriving at Colne, he obtained employment through the assistance of a fellow townsman, and divine Providence again placed him under the wing of a pious master. Whilst in this situation, a good woman who lodged in the same house, and who had been privileged to sit under the soul-stirring ministry of the Rev. William Grimshaw, the venerable vicar of Ilaworth, frequently engaged him to read to her, and humble as

might be the instrument, she succeeded in giving him a clearer insight into the important truths of salvation, and impressing upon him the necessity of a saving change of heart. Truth effected a lodging in his awakened conscience, and for a season produced telling effects, but again his goodness, like the morning cloud and the early dew, passed away.

His roving disposition soon led him again to change his place of abode, and proceeding northwards, the poor wanderer, penniless and hungry, at length reached the city of Durham, where he obtained work in weaving shalloons, from the first manufacturer to whom he applied. Whilst there, having formed an acquaintance with a young man from Barnard Castle, he was induced through his persuasions, to accompany him to this place. This was apparently one of those trivial circumstances in his history, which through a mysterious Providence exerted a decided influence on his whole future course of life. On the morning after his arrival, as his companion and he were passing by the lately erected chapel, the young man pointed to it, remarking in a contemptuous tone, "that's the Methody house." "Ah" thought he, "then by the grace of God, I will go there and hear again the doctrines to which I listened in by-gone days." But his resolutions formed in his own strength, failed to produce any renovating change in his life and conduct. His volatile disposition unsubdued by the grace of God

proved the means of his being introduced into scenes of greater folly and dissipation. A recruiting party was at that time in the town, and following them into a public house, he observed that the sergeant had some new crown pieces. The sight was tempting ; he had not seen such before ; and desirous of possessing one, though not much disposed to enlist, he offered five shillings in exchange. The sergeant gave him the crown, but refused to take up the shillings, and insisted that he was fairly enlisted, in which assertion he was supported by the company in the house. He had then scarcely reached the age of twenty, and being probably less reluctant than he at first professed, to enter the army, was soon marched off to join his regiment in Ireland. Here he remained about a year, when an order for a general reduction being issued, he obtained his discharge and returned to Barnard Castle. A conviction of his sinful state oftentimes distressed his mind, but he laboured to shake off his guilty fears, until at length a painful affliction brought him to serious reflection. To use his own quaint yet significant language, "The Lord took his rod and paid my back well, and then I yielded to the good spirit of his grace." For some months he went on his way earnestly seeking redemption through the blood of Christ and was brought almost to the brink of despair ; but he concealed his feelings, and was "as a sparrow alone upon the housetop." At last however he made his state

known to the Methodists, and sought from them advice and consolation, and whilst Frank Rogers, one of the class-leaders was praying with him in his house, he found "peace with God through Jesus Christ." He thus described the change:—"My mouth was shut, and I was struggling hard to pray, and in a moment the Lord knocked off my chains, and we had a glorious meeting." Frequently in after life has he been heard to refer with the most lively emotions, to this important era of his experience, and pointedly did he urge on his young friends the importance of "a good beginning in religion," originating "in good conviction for sin, deep heartfelt sorrow on account of it, and then a lively faith in the atoning sacrifice." He immediately joined the Methodist society, receiving his note of admission from the excellent Richard Boardman, in the year 1769. He soon after married, and ultimately commenced business as a draper; and from his diligence, integrity, and kindness, connected with the respect which all who knew him, entertained for him, his undertakings prospered. God blessed him "in his basket, and in his store," and he manifested his gratitude by giving cheerfully in support of religion and in assisting the poor.

In the year 1777 he began to exercise his talents in calling sinners to repentance. The circumstance which first led to this step was the non-arrival of the person expected to fill the pulpit at Barnard Castle, on a cer-

tain afternoon. No local preacher then resided in the town, and Simeon being one of the Society Stewards, and deeply concerned at the disappointment, went to consult one of the older members as to the best course to be pursued. He somewhat tartly replied "Those of you, whose duty it is to provide a preacher deserve to preach yourselves." The congregation having assembled, Simeon accordingly attempted to address them, and for about twenty minutes was enabled to deliver to them the word of salvation. The people were surprised and pleased, "good old Joshua Hammond" he said "was quite delighted ; but as soon as I sat down, the devil told me directly, thou must speak no more in public." To this temptation however he did not yield, but soon afterwards accompanied by a few friends, repaired to Boldron, a village about two miles distant, but no one offering him a house he was obliged to deliver his message in the open air. Referring to these early attempts he remarked, "But I was a strange preacher : I spake a few words and then begun to pray for them, and then spake again to them." "I was" he said, "a preacher of the Lord's own making as much as any man in the world." Those who remember his labours in this capacity will readily acknowledge that he was no imitator but a thorough original. He had an interesting method of riveting the attention of his hearers, pursuing his discourses in a colloquial style, and frequently strengthening his remarks by quotations

from the writings of the venerable founder of Methodism, whom he was always accustomed to designate "our good old Father." His preaching was highly appreciated by the societies and congregations in the North, to whom he was for more than half a century a messenger of glad tidings. As a preacher he was more than acceptable, with many he was popular. His discourses on the parables, such as the sower and the seed, the prodigal son, the pharisee and the publican, were delivered in a strain of such beautiful simplicity, as to make the characters live before the people and arrest their attention. Never, in the absence of the regularly appointed preacher was any disappointment felt, if Simeon was at hand to fill up the vacancy, and never did he needlessly complain of the extra amount of service thus imposed upon him. At the prayer meeting his presence was always cheering. Here it was generally his custom to give place to his brethren however much his juniors, until a few minutes prior to its close, when he was wont to strike in with fervent expressions of gratitude for the good meeting, and to pour out his soul to God in a lively strain of ardent devotional feeling. Spirituality of mind was the element in which he breathed, and whilst engaged with his friends in conversation on the ordinary affairs of life, he was never at a loss to drop some kind word of counsel or encouragement, and so draw off their thoughts to the contem-

plation of heavenly things. His Christian character was untarnished, he was

“Spotless, sincere, without offence.”

His attachment to Methodism was firm and unwavering. He was not one of those, who were accustomed to say “the former days were better than these,” and seldom did he show a disposition to exalt the piety of the early Methodists or depreciate that of their successors by any invidious comparison. His last public attempt to speak in behalf of that cause which had so long reigned in his heart, was at the time of our Centenary Meeting. When informed by some friends who called upon him, of the efforts that were being made and the large sums subscribed in behalf of our various institutions, he was for a while aroused from the lethargic state into which he had long sunk through extreme old age, and infirmity, and, with a countenance glistening with delight, at the thought of the triumph that would be gained over the Prince to whom he had so long been a sworn enemy, he exclaimed, “Aye, take thee that Satan, thou hast had many a blow at Methodism, take thee that !” On the day of the meeting he made an effort to leave the chamber to which he had been so long confined, and attired in his best suit, the venerable pilgrim of ninety years was led to the large school room, and though labouring under great exhaustion and loss of energy, interested the assembly by the recital of events respecting Methodism, and its beloved founder which

had come under his own observation. The friends present manifested their esteem for his worth by subscribing the sum of £3 14s. 3d. to be entered in his name, as his offering to the Centenary Fund.

His days were prolonged far beyond the ordinary term of human life, but they were full of labour and sorrow. He was left without a relative, (having survived his wives and children), to sympathize with him and perform such kind offices as might smooth his passage to the tomb. For many years before his death, he was totally deprived of sight, and frequent attacks of illness had so weakened and impaired his memory, that he was unable to recognize even his intimate friends. But religion had so long engrossed his mind that whenever it was made the subject of conversation, he was at once prepared to join in with it, with freedom and pleasure. When pointedly asked, what was the ground of his confidence, and his hope respecting eternity, he promptly replied "Jesus Christ died for me a poor sinner : nothing else ! nothing else !" He particularly requested one of his friends to take care that the following verse should be sung before the door, at his funeral :—

"Let the world their virtue boast, Their works of
righteousness:

I a wretch undone and lost, Am freely saved by grace:
Other title I disclaim, This, only this, is all my plea,
I the chief of sinners am, But Jesus died for me."

On another occasion when supposed to be near his end,

he said to those around him, "If I am not able to say much on my death bed, don't suppose it is not right with me, all is well!" A day or two before his departure, he appeared sensible that the heavenly world was very near, and conversed on the joy he anticipated in meeting with his former friends, particularly questioning whether he should be able to recognize the venerable Wesley, to whom he felt an undying attachment. But the end drew on apace; the pain of dying was scarcely felt,—rather it seemed as though

"The weary wheels of life at last stood still."

He entered into rest on the 19th March, 1844, in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and in the seventy-sixth of his Christian Pilgrimage.

But we must now draw this narrative to a close, abundance of material is not lacking to have considerably enlarged it, had it been expedient. It will doubtless be perceived that a greater amount of space has been allotted to the events of the former half century, than to those of the latter: one reason of this is, that there was the more danger of those being left unrecorded; so many of the incidents being preserved only through the medium of traditionary information, or in publications now to be met with in few hands. The history of the last half century, moreover, is patent to a greater number of individuals, whilst the regular periodicals of our body preserve those memorials which, at a former period would have been suffered to perish.

But before we take leave of our subject, as we contemplate the work that has been accomplished, and the present aspect of the church, surely we may in the spirit of adoring wonder and gratitude, exclaim, "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT !" About a century ago, the Dales circuit was just making its appearance, as the "little cloud like unto a man's hand," seen by the prophet's servant : not more than two preachers, and for some length of time afterwards not more than three, were employed in running to and fro o'er its mountains, and along its valleys, but now the same extent of country is cultivated by the labours of twenty eight Christian ministers, devoted exclusively to the work, and supplemented by the toil of some hundreds of local brethren, who in connexion with other agencies, are rendering acceptable services in the same hallowed employ. A century ago, less than five hundred members appeared, as the acknowledged fruit of Methodistic labour, now, about seven thousand souls within the same boundary are in union with this section of the Church of God, the living witnesses of the power of grace divine. And we cannot forget that during the same period, thousands more have passed away, whose names are no longer known upon earth, but are found written amongst the living in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

One particular lesson taught by this narrative is the immense obligation, under which the church in the

present day is laid, to that disinterested and laborious class of gospel messengers, and to that courageous, faithful band of God's witnesses, who in times of rebuke and blasphemy maintained their profession, and cheerfully bore the burthen and heat of the day. They have paved the way for us. They laboured, and we have entered into their labours. May the present race of Methodists, shew themselves worthy descendants of their illustrious predecessors, and following them as they followed Christ, preserve uncorrupted, and hand down untarnished, to succeeding generations, that christian simplicity and sincerity, which was the distinguishing adorning of their primitive fathers and brethren.

THE END. •

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